HOLDEN'S DILEMMA

VAUXHALL GT | BUICK AVISTA

Lightweight Euro sport or American Monaro?

wheels

MARCH 2016

facebook.com/W... ...alia A...ilable On the App St...e & Google Play

$9.50 (inc GST) NZ $9.70 (inc GST)

X-PLOSIVE!

345KW XR8 SPRINT • 325KW XR6 SPRINT

Ford unleashes the big guns for final Falcon

Mazda MX-5 v Toyota 86

COTY kings clash for sports supremacy

PLUS

Oz rated: Mustang V8

Ford's new hero tested on Aussie roads

9 313006 001508 03

FIND YOUR SENSES. LOSE YOURSELF.
THAT'S PURE ZOOM-ZOOM.
MX-5
IMAGINATION DRIVES US

When horse and rider become one they share one pure focus - the thrill of the ride. In Japan this connection is known as 'Jinba Ittai', and is the inspiration behind every Mazda. Our combination of performance, design, safety and connectivity work in perfect harmony to achieve the same feeling a horse and rider experience - the feeling of pure Zoom-Zoom. **mazda.com.au/range**

MAZ1464_1

Contents

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 17 MARCH

FIRST DRIVES

44 FORD MUSTANG
Giddy up, 'Straya

50 RANGE ROVER EVOQUE
Hipster replacement

51 PORSCHE 911 CARRERA 4
Still great, just different

52 HAVAL H8
China's pimped luxo barge

54 RENAULT MEGANE
French evolution

58 LEXUS RC200t
Two doors, one turbo

59 LEXUS GS200t
Same engine, bigger body

60 FORD FOCUS RS
Brings a gun to the hot hatch knife fight

64 TESLA MODEL S P90D
Ludicrous autonomy

66 MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT
The new Challenger

67 HONDA CR-V
A change of heart

68 KIA SPORTAGE
Even more to like

70 HYUNDAI GENESIS V8
Screw the business case

72 VOLKSWAGEN CARAVELLE
Sometimes a man needs a van

73 HAVAL H2
Someone has to come last

REDLINE

10 BUICK AVISTA
Just add a Holden badge

14 SECRET HOLDEN
Opel's Oz-built show star

16 FALCON'S FINALE
Sprinting to the finish

18 METAL STORM
Detroit struts its stuff

20 CHANGING KOREAS
Genesis takes on Germans

24 CANDID CAMERA
COTY's night of nights

26 AMG'S FUTURE
V12 out, electric in

30 POLICE CHASE
New look for cop cars

32 BYE BUY 2015
Another boom year

FEATURES

78 SON SHINES
Mazda design chief steps out of his father's shadow

88 LIGHT FANTASTICS
MX-5 v Toyota 86 – COTY heroes present and past

102 SEVEN HEAVEN
The Tassie whisky trail with BMW's corporate express

112 EURO CHIC
Audi A1 Sportback v Mini Cooper v Peugeot 208 GT v Renault Clio GT

EVERY ISSUE

7 Ed's letter
33 Marketplace
34 Inbox
36 Products
38 The Insider
40 Michael Stahl
42 David Hassall
74 Head-to-head
Holden Astra GTC Sport v Kia Cerato Koup Turbo
126 Our Garage
158 Classic Wheels
Off the dial with Brock
160 Retro
MG's race-to-road rag-top
162 Wheelstories
The king of camo-lots

FORD FOCUS RS
PAGE 60

126 OUR GARAGE

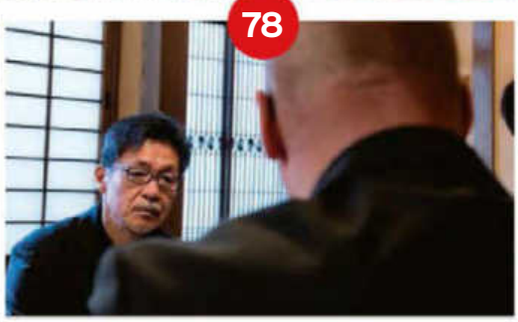
Subscribe to Wheels and SAVE 31%
Go to magshop.com.au/wheels

Spirits of Tasmania

Page 102

112

78



88

ALL-NEW SPORTAGE

Smart Park Assist
(Platinum Only)

Smart Tailgate
(Platinum Only)

Wireless Charger*
(Platinum Only)

KIA

The Power to Surprise

Find your nearest dealer at kia.com.au or ✆131 KIA/131 542

Kia's unlimited km 7 year warranty. Note: 7 year/150,000km warranty for vehicles used for the following: rental vehicles, hire cars, taxis, courier vehicles, driving school vehicles, security vehicles, bus and tour vehicles. Capped Price Servicing: Maximum payable for specified number of manufacturer's standard scheduled maintenance services up to 7 years or 105,000kms, whichever occurs first. Complimentary Roadside Assistance for the first year. Renewed yearly by completing scheduled maintenance services at Kia Dealerships (up to maximum 7 years). Terms and conditions for Warranty, Capped Price Servicing and Roadside Assistance can be found at www.kia.com.au. * Wireless charging compatible with phones featuring Qi technology or adapter. KMAU3819/FPC/WM

Editor's letter

GLENN BUTLER

ONE OF THE NEWS HEADLINES THIS MORNING WAS A CALL BY A ROAD SAFETY EXPERT FOR 40KM/H ZONES IN VICTORIA TO BE LOWERED TO 30KM/H. HE SAID THIS MOVE WOULD DELIVER SUBSTANTIAL SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH BENEFITS. GIVE ME A BREAK.

Coming so early in the year, Bruce Corben's pedestrian-focused proposal might have been a response to the increase in fatalities on Victorian roads last year. In 2015, 258 people died, eight more than the year before and 15 more than the 2013 total of 243, the lowest ever recorded in the state.

But Dr Corben has worked as a researcher for the Monash University Accident Research Centre, so we have to assume he was aware of the 2015 figures, which include a reduction in pedestrian deaths from 44 in 2014 to 33 last year, a considerable drop by any measure.

Dr Corben justified his 30km/h proposal by saying, "It is simply a matter of physics and acknowledging that humans can withstand only a limited amount of energy in a collision before the risk of injury or death starts to rise rapidly."

That word 'risk' is a doozy. It's wielded by road safety experts as a bludgeon against cogent counter-argument. That and the ridiculous throwaway line, "If it saves one life, it's worth it."

If we truly want to adhere to that statement, then outlaw cars altogether. And trucks and buses and bicycles and horses, and any 'conveyance' that can move a human faster than we can run. In fact, better outlaw running too because if two humans run into each other, then severe injury and possibly death will result. And remember, if it saves one life, it's worth it.

Can we please lay that overly simplistic line to rest and instead have an educated discussion about making our roads safer?

As for that word risk, let's look more closely.

Nationally, 1209 people died on our roads last year. That's 5.1 deaths per 100,000 people. Based on that, there is a 0.0051 percent 'chance' that you will die on Australian roads in the next 12 months.

Is it not an admirable achievement to get road safety to the point where the risk of death is so small? Should we not be congratulating our legislators and road builders and car companies in getting an inherently dangerous activity undertaken by millions of Australians every day to the point where the risk really is miniscule?

The problem with acknowledging that we have achieved remarkable things in making our roads safer comes as soon as there's a face behind the fatality. What if it was somebody I knew? My sister? A close friend? Would I still think the risk was acceptable?

I agree that every human life lost on Australian roads is a tragedy. A tragedy I personally witnessed when two drunk young men crashed heavily near a country motel in which I was staying. I was one of a dozen bystanders who got them out of the car before it caught fire, and I watched as their lives slipped away before the ambulance could get there.

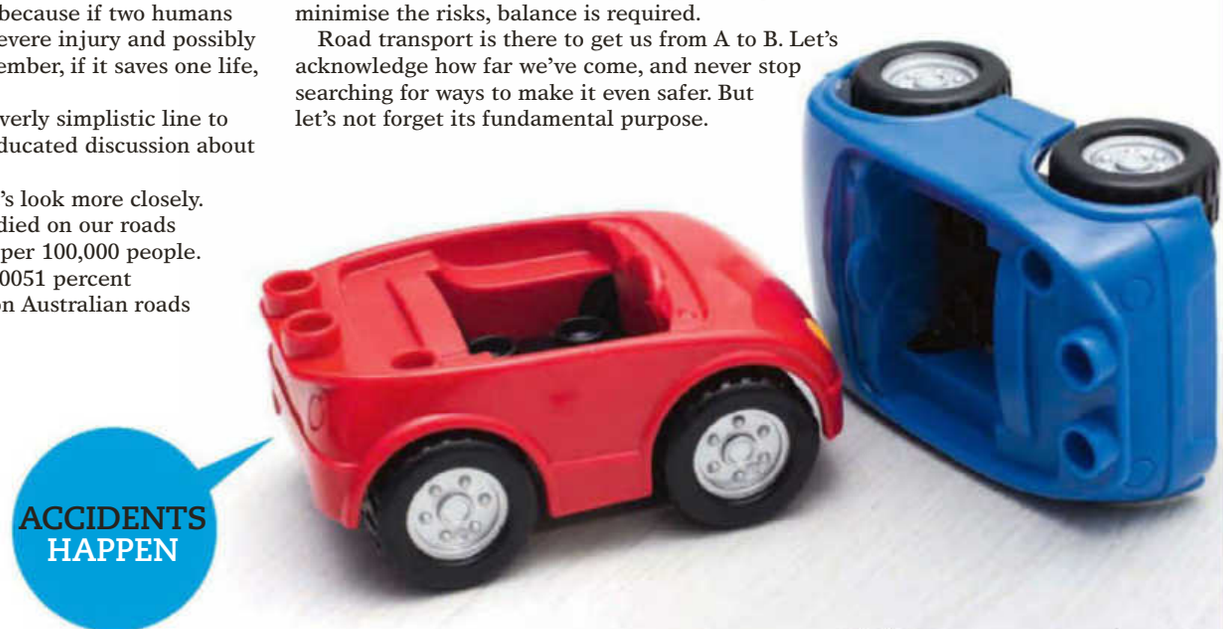
> "If it saves one life, it's worth it." Can we please lay that overly simplistic line to rest?

I would be devastated if one of my family or close friends died on our roads. But I'm realistic enough to know that it happens. Just like planes crash, and non-smokers die from cancer. Life is not without risks, and while we should never stop working to minimise the risks, balance is required.

Road transport is there to get us from A to B. Let's acknowledge how far we've come, and never stop searching for ways to make it even safer. But let's not forget its fundamental purpose.

National road toll at three-year high

The Australian road toll rose 4.9 percent to 1209 in 2015, the highest since 2012. Only South Australia (102 deaths, down 5pc) and Western Australia (160, down 13pc) improved their safety record year on year. The worst-performing state or territory by percentage was the ACT, with a 50 percent increase from 10 to 15 deaths. NSW had the highest road toll with 348 (up 13pc), followed by Victoria on 257 (up 3pc) and Queensland on 242 (up 8pc). Tasmania's road toll was up one to 36, the Northern Territory up 10 to 49.



Love the new car smell but not the new car price?

Like it. Lease it.

If you lease it with LeasePlan, you get all the new car benefits without the hefty price tag. Use Wheels to choose the best car for you. Then find out how much money you can save by visiting

leaseplan.com.au/wheels

LeasePlan

It's easier to leaseplan

leaseplan.com.au

wheels

WHEELSMAG.COM.AU

WHEELS@WHEELSMAG.COM.AU

EDITOR	Glenn Butler
ROAD-TEST EDITOR	Nathan Ponchard
ART DIRECTOR	Felipe Ubilla
SENIOR JOURNALIST	Alex Inwood
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Damion Smy
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Barry Park
SUB EDITOR	David Hassall
DIGITAL PRODUCER	Ian Baker
FEATURES EDITOR	Stephen Corby
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR	Michael Stahl
EUROPEAN EDITOR	John Carey
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS	Ellen Dewar . Nathan Jacobs

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
Bea Barthelson

CONTRIBUTORS
Stephen Corby . Toby Hagon . Peter McKay . Byron Mathioudakis
Bruce Newton . Peter Robinson . Ash Westerman . James Whitbourn

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Cristian Brunelli . Nathan Duff . Thomas Wielecki

GROUP SALES MANAGER
Matt Rice (02) 9263 9706
BRAND SALES MANAGER
Joe Salanitri (03) 9567 4226
VIC AGENCY SALES MANAGER
Andrea de Kauwe 0409 117 675
NSW AGENCY SALES MANAGER
Max Kolomiiets (02) 8275 6486
VIC ADVERTISING
Joe Salanitri (03) 9567 4226
QLD ADVERTISING
Todd Anderson 0409 630 733
SA ADVERTISING
Chris Karamanov 0439 485 835
WA ADVERTISING
Greg Boase 0408 516 176
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION
Kali Cooke
MARKETING ENQUIRIES
Siobhan McNab (03) 9567 4244
Maegan Kinson (03) 9567 4231
SYNDICATION ENQUIRIES
Email: syndication@bauer-media.com.au
SUBSCRIPTION & SALES ENQUIRIES
Web: wheels.magshop.com.au
Email: magshop@magshop.com.au
Phone: 136 116 – 8am to 6pm (EST) Monday to Friday
Mail: Magshop, GPO Box 5252 Sydney NSW 2000

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER	Lynda Jordan
OPERATIONS AND FINANCE MANAGER	Richard Wein
CIRCULATION MANAGER	Stuart Jones
GENERAL MANAGER, BAUER TRADER DIGITAL	Nigel Dearing
DESIGN MANAGER	Danielle Beadman
CREATIVE CONSULTANT	Glen Smith
EDITORIAL OPERATIONS MANAGER	Adam Morrissey
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER	Ged Bulmer
CEO, BAUER TRADER MEDIA	Keith Falconer
ACTING CEO, BAUER MEDIA GROUP	Andreas Schoo

Published by Bauer Trader Media, part of the Bauer Media Group, ABN 18 053 273 546, 54-58 Park Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2001. © 2014. The trademark ***WHEELS*** is the property of Bauer Consumer Media Limited and is used under licence. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0043-4779.
Printed by PMP PRINT, 31-35 Heathcote Road, Moorebank, NSW 2170. (02) 9828 1350

BAUER MEDIA GROUP

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

love that car

THE ALL-NEW PAJERO SPORT

THE ULTIMATE FAMILY SPORTS CAR.

Imagine, a serious 4WD that can take you and your family anywhere in safety and comfort. This is the all-new Pajero Sport - sleek, stylish, and packed with an impressive array of cutting-edge technology that includes:

+ Blind Spot Warning (BSW)*
+ Ultrasonic misacceleration Mitigation System (UMS)*
+ Bird's-eye Multi Around Monitor System*
+ A revolutionary new 8-speed automatic transmission
+ Selectable Off Road Mode
+ And Smartphone Link Display Audio (SDA).

Active families need active experiences. See your dealer or visit the website to experience the all-new Pajero Sport for yourself.

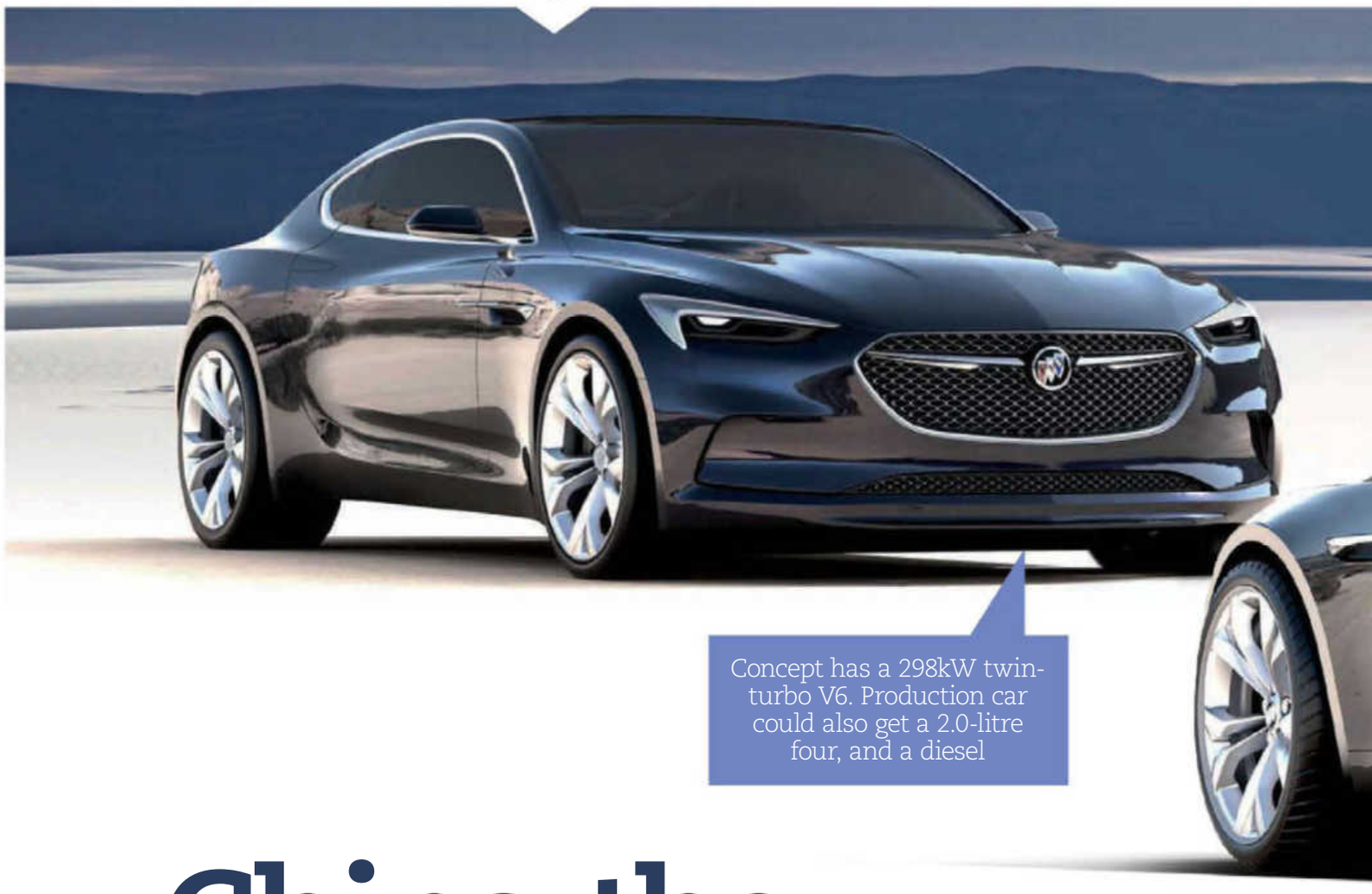
mitsubishi-motors.com.au/vehicles/pajero-sport

FROM

$46,990-$54,990

DRIVE AWAY^

*Exceed model only. Please drive safely and never rely solely on these systems while driving. Exceed model shown at $54,990. ^Driveaway price includes 12 months registration, CTP insurance, stamp duty and dealer delivery.



Concept has a 298kW twin-turbo V6. Production car could also get a 2.0-litre four, and a diesel

China the key to Avista's future

Four-door 'coupe' version of Buick's stunning Detroit concept a possibility for Holden

THE future of Buick's gorgeous Avista concept – and a Holden-badged version – lies in two extra doors, according to General Motors insiders *Wheels* spoke to following the car's Detroit motor show debut.

Sources confirmed that a model of a four-door version exists in the GM styling studio and is under serious consideration following its overwhelmingly positive reaction as the star of the show.

GM has started work on making a business case for building the car, and a Holden-badged version – including a higher-output HSV model – could be in the mix.

GM sources hint the production Avista would likely end up being a four-door coupe designed as

Two pots down, more grunt results

A move to turbocharged engines has brought about the biggest performance jump in the Porsche Boxster's 20-year history. Now known as the 718 Boxster and sporting new four-cylinder engines (a 2.0-litre for the standard car and a 2.5-litre for the S), the facelifted Boxster produces up to 25kW/100Nm more than its predecessor yet sees fuel economy improve by more than 10 percent. Sadly, it's more expensive than ever, with the Boxster S jumping $12,300 to $143,400. The new 718 Boxster arrives in Australia in mid-2016.

Coupe body a long-shot, our source says. Production version likely to have four doors

Avista rides on Camaro's Alpha platform, which can be adapted for right-hand drive

a more affordable rival to the Mercedes-Benz CLS, BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe and Audi A7 Sportback.

While Buick last year showed off a four-door concept – the Australian-designed Avenir – the four-door Avista coupe would be smaller and sleeker, with more emphasis on proportions and design than rear seat space.

The challenge for securing an Avista business case is ensuring enough global demand, and once again right-hand drive production is the big question mark.

In the global automotive game, Buick (which sells only in China and North America) tends to fly under the radar. But with sales of 1.25 million vehicles last year – the highest in Buick's 112 years – it is GM's second best-selling brand worldwide after Chevrolet.

Put that down to China, where it's the country's number two brand. China accounts for about 80 percent of total Buick sales, and therefore holds the key to any decision to produce Avista.

Although Chinese consumers do not currently buy coupes in significant numbers, Buick and GMC vice-president Duncan Aldred doesn't necessarily see that as a roadblock to Avista getting the green light for production.

HOLDEN DESIGNERS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH AVISTA, BUT IT WAS CLEARLY INSPIRED BY 2014'S LARGER AVENIR CONCEPT, WHICH WAS A PRODUCT OF GM'S AUSTRALIAN DESIGN STUDIO

"I think we've earned the right to have the halo car in the Buick range," Aldred says. "We're the premium mainstream brand in China, and there's great value in us continuing to stretch the brand upwards, even though it may not be massive volume."

"China is important to any Buick," admits GM design chief Ed Welburn, who says GM's Chinese product planners have seen the car. While China is now a massive SUV market, Welburn makes the point that Chinese consumers suddenly switched from buying sedans three years ago. "A coupe might be the next big thing."

"He's out of his depth and just shouldn't be there. He's making the numbers up basically"

Mark Webber slams Pastor Maldonado as the worst driver in F1

"Holden's in the mix ... I guess you've gotta see if there is enough volume in the UK with Vauxhall."

– Buick vice-president Duncan Aldred

The Avista concept is based on a mash-up of GM Alpha and Omega components, sharing the Alpha-based Chevrolet Camaro coupe's 2811mm wheelbase and with nearly identical front and rear tracks. Under the bonnet is a 3.0-litre V6 driving the rear wheels through an eight-speed automatic transmission. It's the same engine used in the Cadillac CT6.

"It's buildable," says Cadillac chief engineer Dave Leone. "The business case is the issue."

What helps the business case is that the production version would be built using GM's Alpha architecture, which underpins Cadillac's ATS and CTS as well as Camaro. Alpha means the car would not only share components that are already produced in volume, but a number of different variants of the car could also easily be configured.

The Avista's engine bay, for example, will accept GM's 2.0-litre turbocharged four, and while the 6.2-litre V8 can also be fitted into Alpha, sources say the Avista's underbonnet layout has not been protected for the larger engine. The eight-speed auto can be swapped for a six-speed manual, and it can be built with all-wheel drive as well as rear-drive. Importantly, it can be built in right-hand drive.

That means GM could easily build Opel, Vauxhall and Holden versions of the car, offering powertrains that suit each market, along with different equipment levels and different chassis set-ups.

"Think of all the performance hardware in the parts bin," teases Welburn. An HSV Avista with all-wheel drive and the 346kW, twin-turbo 3.6-litre V6 from the Cadillac ATS-V? It's possible.

"That's just a good business model," says Aldred of selling Avista as an Opel. "If you can build a vehicle that's competing in Europe, North America and China, you've pretty much got it covered."

And what about Holden?

"Holden's in the mix," confirms Aldred, a Brit who was managing director of Vauxhall before taking on the Buick/GMC job, so knows GM's Australian subsidiary well. "We could do right-hand drive. That investment's done, though there is an additional expense. I guess you've gotta see if there is enough volume in the UK with Vauxhall."

Avista has a lot of enthusiastic supporters inside GM. "It's gorgeous," gushed GM chairman and CEO Mary Barra. "I said to Mark [Reuss], 'We have to find a way of doing this one'."

Lower sales expectations and premium margins mean a four-door coupe is perhaps a safer choice as a Buick halo car than a large sedan like the Avenir, which would have had to compete with everything from an S-Class Benz to Hyundai's new Genesis G90.

Even so, GM product planners are wary of committing investment dollars to this notoriously fickle segment. And that's why there's a strong faction inside GM that wants to stretch Avista's wheelbase slightly and add a couple of doors.

JAKE ARMFIELD

VW thumbs nose at Silicon Valley

Volkswagen has set up a fight with the world's biggest tech hub as it tries to wrest the development of electric vehicles back to Europe. VW CEO Matthias Muller said Europe needed to take the technological lead in future areas of the automotive sector. "A true breakthrough for electric mobility will only be achieved if politics, society and authorities work together more closely," he said. "We must not leave this playing field to Silicon Valley." Muller's comments followed closely the announcement that VW will create a new division dedicated solely to electric vehicles.

Six appeal

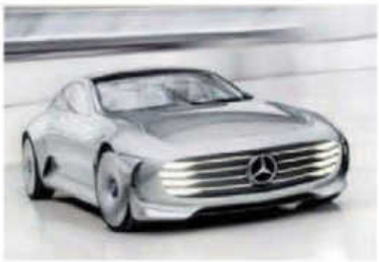
While the Avista isn't set for Australian sale yet, components of it could be.

Peer under the bonnet and the 298kW twin-turbo V6, codenamed LGW and also used in the Cadillac CT6, is one of the engine options that may effectively replace the V8 under the bonnet of imported Commodores from 2018.

In both the Avista and Cadillac, it's mated to an eight-speed automatic.

Of course, expect more power than that if HSV gets to work its magic.

Fuel economy is also expected to be strong, courtesy of cylinder deactivation and idle-stop.



2018 launch for Benz's Tesla rival

Board members Thomas Weber and Ola Kallenius have revealed to *Wheels* Mercedes-Benz will launch its first all-electric model in 2018, tipped to be a large sedan to rival the likes of the Tesla Model S. The production car (teased with the futuristic IAA Concept, left) will be Mercedes-Benz's first all-electric model, and is expected to sit between the Mercedes C-Class and E-Class in size. It will have a range of 400-500km, seat five and ride on a version of the company's MRA (Modular Rear Architecture) platform.

Holden's secret project

Opel's Aussie-built lightweight GT Concept hints at a fun and affordable Toyota 86 rival

Holden won't discuss its involvement, but Melbourne skyline in official images is evidence it was built Down Under

Red tyres, mounted on roller skate-like rims, are a reference to the Opel Motoclub 500 motorcycle from the 1920s

MEET the top-secret show-stopper that started life in Holden's Port Melbourne design studios in the middle of 2015.

The eye-catching Opel GT Concept, which is shaping up to be one of the stars of the Geneva motor show (March 3-13), was designed in Europe but is a product of Holden's secret fabrication group, one of only two in the General Motors world that can create one-off show stars.

The radical two-door coupe sits on a unique rear-drive platform that gives it the driver-focused nous to take on the COTY-winning Mazda MX-5 and 2012 winners the Toyota 86/Subaru BRZ twins.

Described as a "template for future sports cars", the GT Concept from GM's European brands is targeted to weigh less than 1000kg.

It's built on a bespoke rear-drive platform and uses GM's new all-aluminium 1.0-litre three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine, producing 107kW and 205Nm. It drives through a six-speed sequential gearbox and accelerates to 100km/h in "under eight seconds" on the way to a maximum of 215km/h.

The unusual styling is described by GM Europe design chief Mark Adams as "purebred, pared down, yet unashamedly avant-garde".

"It is dramatic, sculptural and full of innovations, which is our great tradition that we intend to continue," Adams said. "In the mid-60s Vauxhall and Opel created their own interpretations of a lightweight sports car – the XVR and the Experimental GT – both of which were thoroughly modern with dynamic sculptural form."

While a rear-drive platform under the concept would be crucial to the production GT's

Toyota stays global No.1

Toyota has outpaced Volkswagen to hold onto the title of the world's largest carmaker for the fourth year running. The Japanese carmaker sold 10.5 million vehicles last year, up slightly on 2014's result, compared with second-placed Volkswagen's 9.9 million, down sharply on the previous year's numbers as the Dieselgate scandal turned off buyers in some markets. General Motors rounded out the top three, selling 9.8 million vehicles globally for the year, also slightly down on 2014's result.

Vauxhall link means RHD – and, therefore, a Holden badge – almost certain if GT makes it to production

Rear-drive unlikely to flow through to production; more likely is a Corsa-based front-drive platform

ability to battle rivals like the Toyota 86 and Mazda MX-5, GM Europe sources say it's unlikely, and that the Barina/Corsa FWD architecture makes more business sense. The company hopes to gather more market intelligence after the GT is unveiled at the Geneva show.

One insider said the GT Concept shows the company's direction: "Like the new (European) Astra, this car continues with the theme of making a car that is no bigger than it needs to be. One that is pared-down, light and no more complex than necessary."

As for a Holden version of the production car? It's possible, especially if the GT gets the green light for sale in the UK. But the little concept car that Australia built still has a number of gates to clear before those negotiations can take place.

WHEELS STAFF

wheels

Ford deals left hook to right-hook

Ford has pulled out of two right-hand-drive markets in Asia after lacklustre sales in the region. Showrooms in Japan – which is often involved in right-hand-drive business cases with Australia and the UK – and Indonesia will close later this year after the carmaker said it saw "no reasonable path to profitability" in either of the markets. To put the brand's lacklustre performance into perspective, Ford sold 14 times more cars in Australia (in a market that was down 11.6 percent in 2015) than it did in Japan for the same period.

XR8 gets black roof and bootlid lip-spoiler; both are body-coloured on the XR6

Unique sprint decals for XR6 and XR8

Model Falcon XR6 Sprint
Engine 4.0-litre turbo 6cyl
Max power 325kW
Max torque 576Nm
Transmission 6-sp auto only
Price $54,990

Model Falcon XR8 Sprint
Engine 5.0-litre s'chg V8
Max power 345kW
Max torque 575Nm
Transmission 6-sp man/6-sp auto
Price $59,990/$62,190

Staggered black 19-inch alloys, Brembo brakes with gold calipers

Revised fog-light surrounds the main visual cue up front

Jaguar F-Type SVR

Jaguar's performance-crazed Special Vehicle Operations division has been let loose on the F-Type, and this hardcore 320km/h two-seater is the result. Called the F-Type SVR, power comes from the same 5.0-litre supercharged V8 as in the F-Type R, but grunt is up from 404kW/680Nm to 423kW/700Nm. There's a host of lightweight additions too, including forged aluminium wheels, ceramic brakes and a titanium exhaust. A more aggressive body kit completes the treatment. The F-Type SVR is available as both a coupe and convertible.

Sprint to the finish line

Double-barrel high-performance salute to Falcon with 325kW XR6 and 345kW XR8

HERE they are – the last new models to ever wear the Ford Falcon badge in Australia.

After 56 years of local production, the famous nameplate is getting a 345kW send-off in the form of the V8-powered XR8 Sprint.

The 5.0-litre supercharged engine was a "special project" that involved an extensive development program as part of Ford's $300 million R&D spend in 2015.

The V8's 345kW/575Nm output gives it a modest 10kW boost over regular XR8s but sits 6kW below the 351kW output of the GT-F, the last of the FPV Falcons that was launched in 2014. Ford always claimed that GT-F would be the most powerful locally produced Ford, although until now we didn't know it would be the only car to get that 351kW tune.

The XR8 Sprint will be joined in dealerships by an XR6 Sprint, a 325kW/576Nm version of the XR6 Turbo and the most powerful version of Ford's much-loved straight-six, which began its force-fed career in the 2002 BA.

The XR6 Sprint's output is 15kW more than the 310kW produced by the old FPV F6. Many (wrongly) believed Ford would simply slot the F6's engine into the Sprint.

And there's even more power available. Both engines have a transient overboost function for short higher-output bursts; in the XR6 it peaks at 380kW/660Nm and in the XR8 400kW/650Nm.

Visual changes to the Sprints are minimal, and surprisingly understated. The massive gold-painted Brembo calipers are the biggest give-away; they're the same six-piston fronts and four-piston rears used on the GT-F.

Bumpers and panels are unchanged – although the fog-light surrounds within have changed – leaving the new rear lip spoiler and black 19-inch wheels to do most of the talking. The chrome strip across the boot has been painted body colour and the XR6 Sprint picks up the XR8's wing mirrors with built-in indicators.

The XR6 also picks up the XR8's wider rear tyres, helping tame its massive torque. It also gets a hockey-stick graphic from the rear wheelarches to the tail-lights, while the XR8 gets a unique black sticker across all four doors, as well as a painted black roof and matching black lip spoiler.

The XR6 Sprint continues with a single large oval exhaust and the XR8 with its quad pipes and bulging bonnet.

Inside, there's a smattering of Sprint badges, including on the scuff plates, and the seats are a mix of Alcantara and leather.

Just 1400 Sprints will be produced, with 150 going to New Zealand, leaving 500 XR6s and 750 XR8s for Australian Ford faithful to fight over.

The auto-only XR6 Sprint costs $54,990 – $9300 more than regular XR6s, which will only continue for police purchases – while the XR8 Sprint is $59,990 for a manual and $62,190 for an auto. That's $6500 more than the regular XR8.

Both Sprint models will hit Ford showrooms in May.

TOBY HAGON

Six and out

The 325kW engine in the XR6 Sprint will go down as the most powerful production six-cylinder to emerge from Australia. It will also go down as the most powerful all-Aussie engine ever produced because the V8s that out-thump it these days are local iterations of American designs.

The roots of the 4.0-litre straight six go back to 1960, but the latest twin-cam turbocharged version bears almost no resemblance.

When the 500 XR6 Sprints are snapped up it will be the end of the line for a fantastic engine.

Badge cred

Ford's Sprint-badged muscle-car heritage began with the '63½' US Falcon Sprint. Featuring a 260ci (4.3-litre) Windsor V8, shoehorned into a first-gen two-door body (think XM-XP Hardtop), it was the very first Falcon V8. A new-look US Falcon followed for '64, carrying over the mechanicals in the youth-oriented Sprint, but its appeal was short-lived. The Mustang launched just six months later, and even a bigger 289ci (4.7-litre) V8 couldn't save the Falcon Sprint. It was dumped after the '65 model year, but its spirit lives on in Jim Richard's Muscle Car Masters racer (pictured).

REALITY CHECK

"I think that within two years, you'll be able to summon your car from across the country"

Elon Musk predicts a fully autonomous Tesla that can drive itself from New York to LA

Show of style

The 2016 Detroit motor show dazzled with a mix of hot new metal, headlined by sleek rear-drive coupes

INFINITI Q60

Riding on the same rear-drive platform as the Q50 sedan, the Q60 replaces the current 370Z-based coupe later this year. It's longer, wider and lower than that car. A new-gen 3.0-litre twin-turbo V6 will be available in two tunes (224kW and 298kW), with only the higher output likely for Australia. We're also expected to miss out on the six-speed manual, instead making do with the seven-speed auto.

Due here? Q3 2016

Apple car chief quits

The chief architect of Apple's top secret Project Titan, who was believed to be working on a self-driving car, has quit the company. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that former Ford engineer Steve Zadesky had left the software and computing giant for personal reasons, leaving a gaping hole in the electric car development program. Reports have also suggested that Apple has again approached BMW to convince it to become a partner in the project several years after its first attempt to bring the German carmaking giant on board.

LEXUS LC500

It's as close as Lexus has come to a 911 fighter, but the LC500 is closer in size to an S-Class Coupe. It debuts the company's new Global Architecture Luxury (GA-L) set to underpin all future Lexus front-engine, rear-drive models. A 10-speed auto is mated to the same 5.0-litre atmo V8 in the lesser RC-F. Carbonfibre door structures help create an ultra-stiff monocoque.

Due here? 2017

FISKER FORCE 1

The Force 1 created a snowstorm before the doors of the icy Detroit motor show flung open. Company head Henrik Fisker had a legal letter fired his way from former employer Aston Martin, concerned that the American-made supercar looked too close to its own designs. Squint and you might notice some similarities, but the Viper-based Force 1 is bolder and busier, and with a longer bonnet. It's bold underneath, too, with a 550kW 8.4-litre V10.

Due here? Don't hold your breath...

ACURA PRECISION CONCEPT

It's claimed to "shape the future of Acura" and it certainly comes with a bold aesthetic punch. The Precision from Honda's US luxury brand is all about angles and shapes and contrasts, from its 22-inch wheels and shark-like snout to its Batmobile-infused tail. Rear-hinged back doors open the way to a futuristic interior dominated by a curved centre control screen. No word on what's beneath the bonnet. Not that it matters – the Precision is more about themes and ideas than a radical new model. Look to the details and design for inspiration on future Acura models.

Due here? It's dreaming for now

AUDI H-TRON

It's more about what's beneath the skin of the h-tron rather than its searing yellow hue. The hydrogen-fueled concept boasts a range of 600km from a trio of hydrogen tanks, which can be refilled in four minutes. The fuel cell provides 100kW of power, while a battery pack provides a 100kW boost to the electric motors – one mounted on each axle.

Due here? 2020

Pick-ups, SUVs dominate US sales in 2015

Sales of SUVs and pick-up trucks have grown strongly in the US, prompting carmakers including Fiat Chrysler and Hyundai to question why they sell normal passenger cars there. More than 9.7 million light trucks were sold in the US last year, compared with 6.3 million SUVs and 7.7 million passenger cars. The Ford F-Series light truck was the US's best-selling vehicle in 2015, snaring 780K buyers. Also ranking highly were imported compact SUVs such as the Toyota RAV4 and Honda CR-V.

Hyundai preps prestige onslaught

Luxury brand Genesis to launch six models in four years, including a 3 Series rival, an M4-fighter and two SUVs

Price the Dakar champ

Yes, this involves a motorbike, not a car, but some achievements are simply too astonishing to ignore. And becoming the first Australian to win the gruelling Dakar Rally is just such an achievement. Toby Price, who hails from Singleton in New South Wales, took out the iconic two-week event in January aboard his KTM. In doing so, the 28-year-old cemented his place as Australia's new off-road hero. The win capped off a miraculous career comeback for Price, who only three years earlier broke his neck in a riding accident.

HYUNDAI'S ambitions for its Genesis luxury spin-off brand stepped up two gears with the revelation it will launch six new models in the next four years, including two crossovers and a premium sports coupe.

Genesis will also benefit from Hyundai's 'N' department, similar to BMW's M Division, which will be tasked with turning out highly-focused sporting versions of many Hyundai and Genesis models, including a twin-turbocharged Coupe to rival the BMW M4.

Hyundai is empire-building, and sparing no expense as it goes after the posh end of town. The Korean company that made its name in the 1990s producing cut-price cars is now focusing on the lucrative prestige market.

Not only has Hyundai grabbed Luc Donckerwolke, a Belgian designer with experience at Audi, Lamborghini and Bentley, it has also poached the previous boss of BMW M, Albert Biermann, to lead its engineering team.

If that wasn't enough, in late 2015 it lured Lamborghini's director of brand and design, Manfred Fitzgerald, to head up its Genesis luxury brand globally.

The Genesis brand will stand above Hyundai in a similar way that Lexus does to Toyota.

It will have six dedicated new models – not shared with Hyundai models – by 2020 to not only help differentiate it from its parent but carve a slice of the premium market from BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz.

The first car to fly the flag for Genesis globally will be the Equus replacement revealed at the 2016 Detroit show as the Genesis G90, a large rear-drive luxury sedan to rival 7 Series and S-Class.

The G90 will be powered by a choice of the company's new 272kW 3.3-litre twin-turbo V6, the existing 3.8-litre V6 offered in the Australian Genesis sedan, and a 5.0-litre V8.

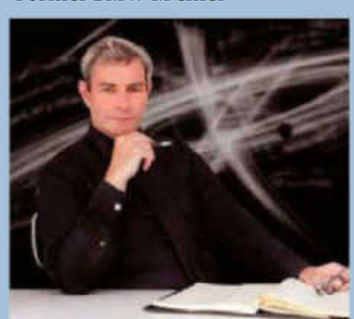
It has huge potential in North America and China, but there are no plans for right-hand drive, so it won't come to Australia.

Hyundai is sparing no expense as it goes after the posh end of town

Big game poaching

Manfred Fitzgerald
Hyundai VP, Genesis brand
Former Lamborghini brand mgr

Albert Biermann
Head of engineering
Former BMW M chief



Luc Donckerwolke
Hyundai prestige design director
Former head of Bentley design

Paris debut for Opel's Commodore?

Australia should get its first close-up look at the car destined to replace the Holden Commodore when the next-generation Opel Insignia makes its debut at the Paris motor show in October. While not yet officially confirmed for the show, the Euro sedan (artist's impression at left) and wagon's makeover is expected to shed up to 100kg and introduce a range of turbocharged 1.6-litre engines. One model will have a 300kW turbo V6 sending drive to all four corners that could wear the SS badge Down Under.

"For the future … if you go to performance it might be you need to go to turbo"

- Albert Biermann, Hyundai vehicle development boss

Mid-2016, the Hyundai Genesis sedan that introduced the brand name to Australia will be rechristened Genesis G80 and be treated to a light spec and mechanical update. It's unlikely to get the 3.3-litre turbo until a later, more comprehensive upgrade, though the existing 3.8-litre V6 may come in for performance and efficiency improvements.

In 2017, Genesis will launch its first all-new model on an all-new platform, a Mercedes C-Class rival badged G70. This mid-size car, likely to be revealed in concept form at the New York show in late March and powered by the 3.3 twin-turbo V6, will initially be offered as a sedan; a coupe will follow in late-2017 or 2018, while a convertible is also a possibility.

Hyundai USA president Dave Zuchowski told *Wheels* the G70 will be the first car to show what Genesis is really capable of. "This BMW 3 Series-fighter is the first real lightning flash that comes down in terms of 'Wow, these guys are really working'," he said.

Both the sedan and coupe will be prime candidates for the nascent N performance division, led by former BMW M boss Biermann. It's not known whether it will turn the wick up on the 3.3-litre V6, or add two more cylinders to produce a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 to go up against AMG's 375kW V8TT and BMW's 317kW twin-turbo six.

An alternative to Hyundai's existing 5.0-litre V8 is needed because it's on borrowed time. Biermann all but ruled it out for the G70, saying, "For the future … if you go to performance it might be you need to go to turbo".

Zuchowski also confirmed that Genesis will launch two crossovers by 2020. "Think

Google picks up 'Strayan accent

Internet search giant Google has released a new Australian version of its voice function that includes Australian slang and better articulation of tricky Australian place names than some of the locals. Using its Android mobile software, users can now say "Okay Google, where's the nearest Maccas?" and the software will direct you to the closest American fast food establishment. Other slang terms include the likes of "Brissie", "servo" and "Woolies", to name a few.

of [them] as [BMW] X3 and X5, one based off of the [new] platform, one based off Genesis platform."

No names were given for these cars, but both are surely candidates for N performance packs to rival the X3M and X5M.

"This isn't just something we're talking about; this is something we're throwing considerable resources, people and dollars against," Zuchowski said.

"And some people may never accept that ... they can't come to terms with it. And that's fine. In reality, in a blind taste test if you will, these cars are going to be outstanding."

Hyundai Australia is excited by the opportunities presented by the Genesis brand's coming product portfolio. While the G90 is ruled out, each new model in the line-up will be considered.

GLENN BUTLER

2020 for Santa Cruz

Australia may have to wait up to seven years to get Hyundai's Santa Cruz lifestyle utility, which has been confirmed for production.

Wheels has been told the significant development push and investment from Hyundai's North American division almost certainly rules out any chances of the Santa Cruz being developed for right-hand-drive markets in its initial instalment, which could be as early as 2017.

While the Santa Cruz is ultimately planned for export markets – "From our perspective it's a vehicle that will be exported to other markets," says Hyundai product planning vice-president Mike O'Brien – initially the ambitious Korean brand is keen to cement its place in the US, where most sales will be made.

The prospects of a right-hand-drive model lie with a likely update around 2020 or, more likely, a second-generation Santa Cruz in about 2023.

Genesis NSX rival?

Hyundai is working on a top-secret supercar – that's right, a supercar – as a flagship to its new Genesis luxury range and upcoming N performance model range.

Wheels has learnt that the Genesis supercar is currently being developed, with Porsche, Ferrari, BMW, Audi and Mercedes-AMG in its crosshairs, and Hyundai has been testing rival cars at its Namyang proving ground in Korea.

Speaking at the 2016 Detroit motor show in January, Hyundai vice-president of product planning Mike O'Brien all but confirmed the supercar.

Asked if a halo car could be used to shine a spotlight on the brand in the same way Lexus used the LFA and Honda the NSX, O'Brien was forthright. "Absolutely," he replied. "And [new performance chief] Albert Biermann, who we hired from BMW M, is actively working on that right now."

Biermann was guarded when quizzed about details, but revealed the supercar would be turbocharged and could use some form of electrification.

Tougher Tucson steps up

Hyundai Australia has earned a five-star crash rating for its Tucson SUV after it received a disappointing four-star result the first time around. The Australasian New Car Assessment Program re-rated the mid-size SUV after Hyundai went back to the drawing board, strengthening the passenger footwell and redesigning the brake pedal so it would not move as much in a crash. "It is encouraging to see Hyundai make a number of design and production changes to improve the safety of the vehicle," ANCAP chief executive James Goodwin said.

COTY's gala night

Industry gathers to celebrate as Mazda MX-5 is declared 2016 *Wheels* Car of the Year

MORE than 200 of the Australian car industry's elite watched as the Mazda MX-5 roadster was crowned the 2016 *Wheels* Car of the Year on January 20.

The gala Crown Casino event, which attracted chief executives, marketing managers and even senior engineers from more than 30 leading car brands, also incorporated presentations for *Motor* Performance Car of the Year (Porsche 911 GT3), *4X4 Australia* 4x4 of the Year (Ford Everest Trend), and the WhichCar Style Award (Alfa Romeo 4C).

It capped off months of planning, testing and analysis that made up the inaugural Australian Motoring Awards.

The event was hosted by TV personality and sports presenter Mark Beretta, and included a guest appearance by Porsche factory driver and newly crowned 2015 World Endurance Champion Mark Webber.

Mazda's win in the 2016 *Wheels* Car of the Year was the third time the iconic MX-5 sports car had earned Australia's top motoring award for excellence.

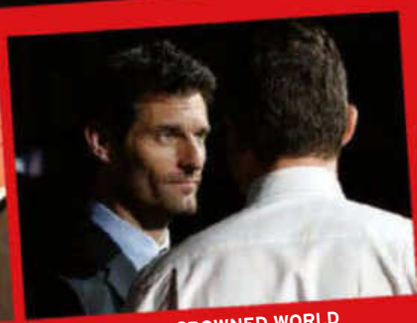
The Mazda finished ahead of the new-generation Audi Q7 and the car described as Jaguar's best effort yet, the BMW 3 Series-fighting Jaguar XE, to snare the coveted title.

BARRY PARK

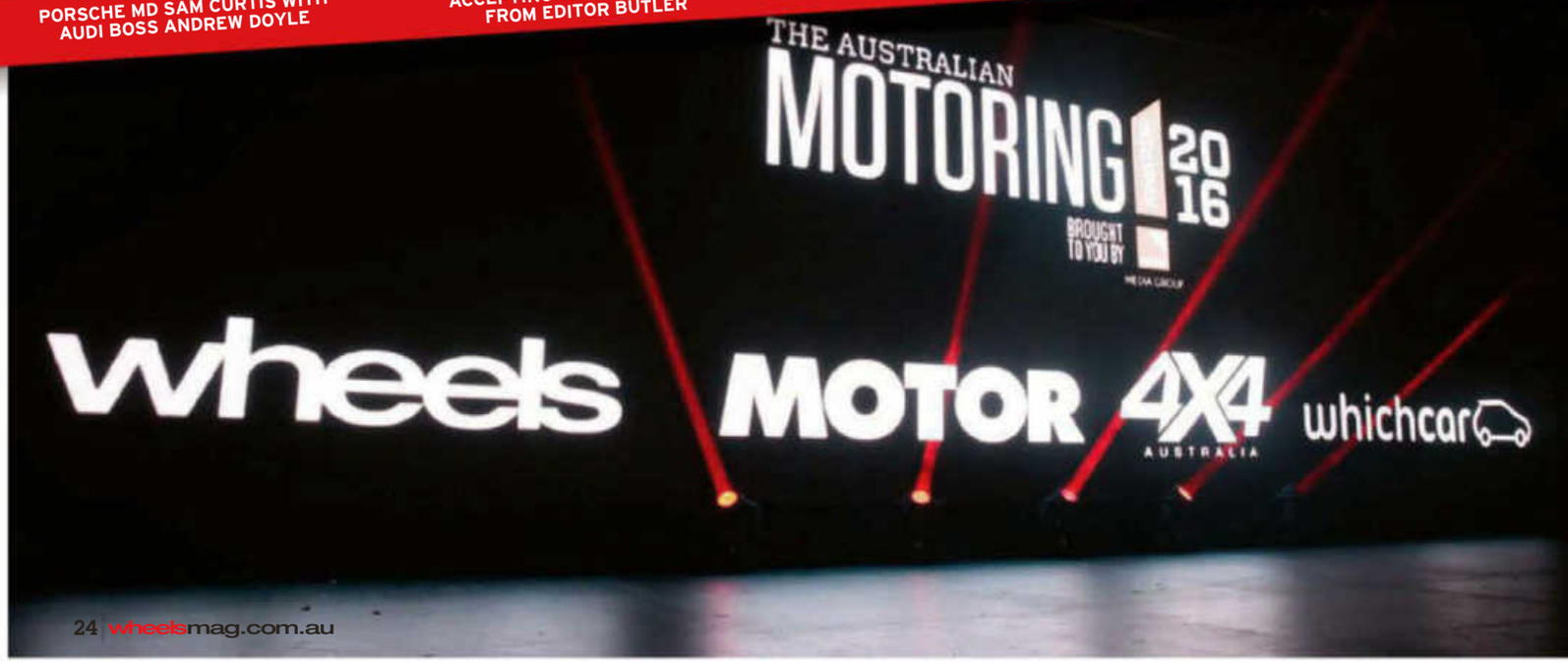
PORSCHE MD SAM CURTIS WITH AUDI BOSS ANDREW DOYLE

MAZDA MD MARTIN BENDERS ACCEPTING THE COTY AWARD FROM EDITOR BUTLER

NATHAN PONCHARD HOLDS COURT WITH AUDI AND TOYOTA EXECS



NEWLY CROWNED WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMP MARK WEBBER



Run! DMC to make a comeback

The Californian owners of DeLorean have flagged they are keen to start low-volume production of the stainless steel-bodied, gullwing-doored icon of the 1980s. "In anticipation of the [US] Low Volume Manufacturing Act ... DeLorean Motor Company has been working for some time to identify a supplier for engines and other parts that must be reproduced to allow production for 2017," it said. "A number of hurdles exist before production can begin, and we're still early on in this process of determining the feasibility of moving forward." In other words, it's not quite back to the future yet.

Watch it at wheelstv
WheelsMag.com.au/**AMAnight**

BAUER TRADER EXECUTIVES KEITH FALCONER AND ANDREW STEADWELL

REAL LIVING'S DEB BIBBY AND *BELLE*'S TANYA BUCHANAN WITH PUBLISHER CORNELIA SCHULZE (CENTRE)

FERRARI AUSTRALASIA CHIEF HERBERT APPLEROTH REBUFFS THE EDITOR'S LONG-TERM F12 REQUEST

A HAPPY MAZDA BOSS AGAIN, THIS TIME WITH MARC-HEINRICH WERNER, MD OF 2014 WINNER BMW

wheels

2016 CAR OF THE YEAR

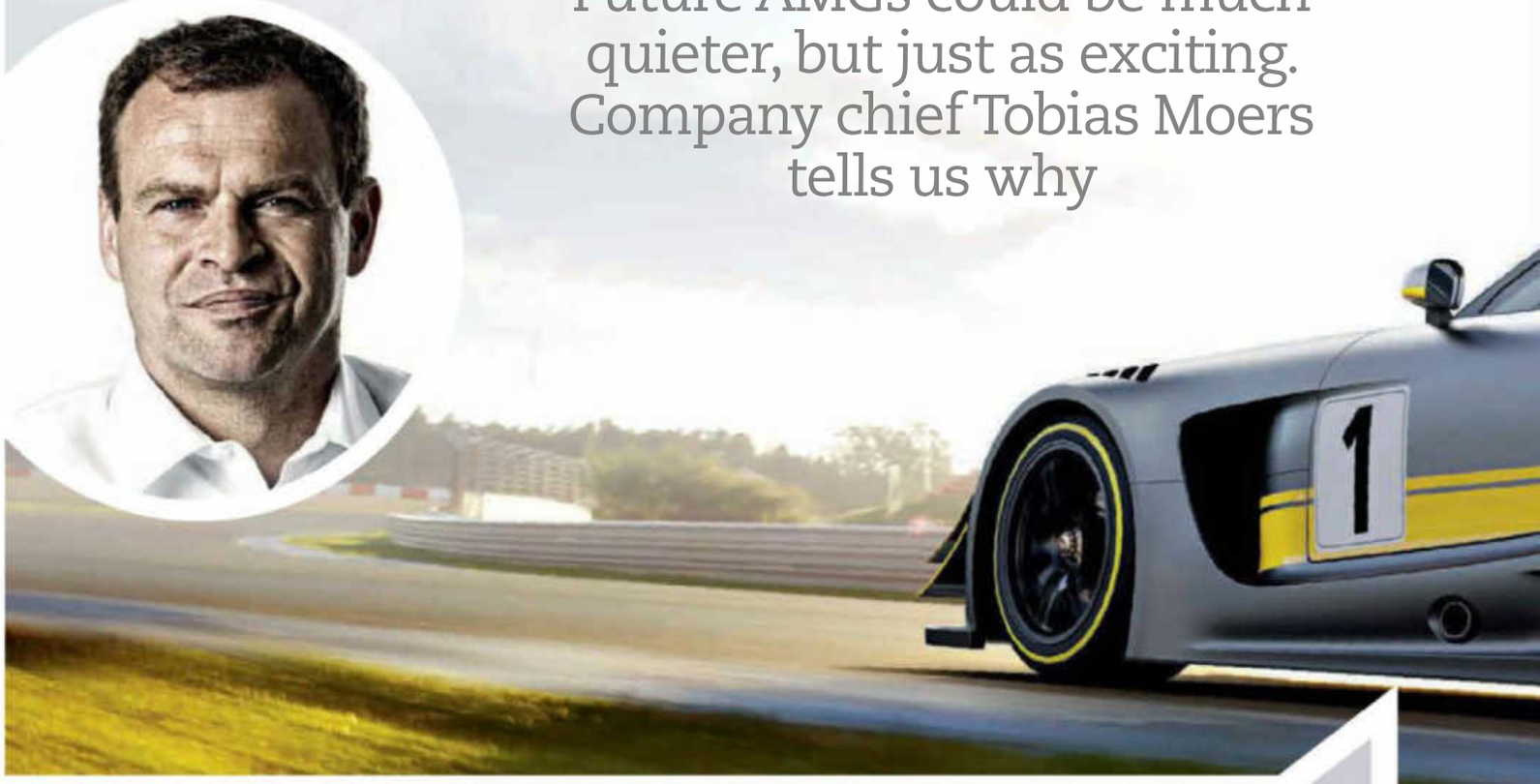
Redline

4010

Proof that Australia is one of, if not the most lucrative markets for AMG worldwide. Aussies bought 4010 AMG models last year, which equates to about 13 percent of all local Mercedes-Benz sales. No other AMG market has such a proportionally high penetration.

The science and silence of AMG

Future AMGs could be much quieter, but just as exciting. Company chief Tobias Moers tells us why



Road racer: GT R

The test bed for much of AMG's next-gen tech will be a hotter, track-focused version of the AMG GT, called GT R. Caught here by our spy photographers during the final stages of development, the GT R draws inspiration from the GT3 racer (above) and is tipped to be 100kg lighter than the current AMG GT. There'll be more grunt too; however, the GT R is unlikely to be the fastest AMG GT you can buy. Moers hinted an even quicker Black Series variant is in the pipeline.

Full throttle

This is the world's smartest throttle pedal. Created by the boffins at Bosch, this "active gas pedal" communicates with the driver by buzzing, tapping or even applying counter-pressure to help you drive more efficiently. Feedback is sent to your right foot if you accelerate too aggressively or exceed the speed limit, while other signals tell the driver when to shift gears and when to coast to save juice. Bosch says it should reduce your fuel bill by seven percent. It's a boon for safety too; it warns drivers to slow for corners or of potential traffic hazards by connecting to your car's sat-nav and other assist systems.

AMG chairman Tobias Moers has revealed to *Wheels* that AMG is shifting its focus away from power and on to sharper dynamics for its future models.

This means the introduction of high-tech systems such as active aerodynamics, four-wheel steering and even a Drift Mode function as AMG moves into a new battleground in the war for performance car ascendency.

AMG has long held a power advantage over its rivals at BMW's M Division and Audi RS, and Moers says the focus is now on finessing how that prodigious grunt is sent to the road.

"It's not my target to be the most powerful car," he said. "The target is to be the best driving car. The next step is to be more active, with more active systems like active aero, and to be more active with kinematics."

Moers revealed AMG is well advanced in developing a range of active systems, most of which will debut on the much-hyped road-legal version of the AMG GT3 racing car due later this year. Expected to be badged as the GT R, Moers says the Porsche 911 GT3 rival "will signal the next step for AMG." It's also likely to be the first AMG to utilise four-wheel steering.

"We discussed active technology earlier, and this will be one of those systems," Moers told us. "It will help to increase high-speed stability, yaw damping at high speed, and you can increase agility in the car as well. It's good technology."

The GT R, which is in the final stages of development, takes heavy inspiration from the GT3 racer (pictured) and will include a more aggressive, track-inspired body kit, dominated by a larger rear spoiler and front splitter. Moers hinted this makes the GT R the ideal model to debut active aerodynamic components to improve dynamics.

AMG's future picks up

AMG's future plans could also expand to include the new Mercedes ute, due to land in Oz in 2018. AMG boss Tobias Moers revealed Affalterbach is considering fettling a more hardcore variant of the ute, expected to be called the Mercedes-Benz GLT. Pitched as a rival to Toyota's Hilux and the Ford Ranger, the GLT will share underpinnings with the D23 Nissan Navara. Don't hold your breath for an AMG-tuned V8-powered GLT, though. Moers said AMG's involvement is likely to be cosmetic: "It won't be a proper AMG car," he said.

WHEELS IMAGE

The GT R will also be lighter than the 1570kg AMG GT S, boast wider tracks front and rear, and could produce as much as 415kW from its 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8. Moers wouldn't be drawn on the GT R's potential power output, but did say "we have plenty of room to grow [with the 4.0-litre engine]." Currently the 4.0-litre V8 produces 375kW/750Nm in the AMG GT S.

Future models will see AMG step even further along the high-tech route. Moers revealed he sees a future where AMG models are powered purely by electricity and confirmed his engineers are already developing electric drivetrains that could manifest in a number of different forms.

"Electrification makes more sense to me than performance diesels," he said. "We are looking at everything from plug-in hybrids to pure electric and electric turbos because we are not in position to exclude something from our portfolio. So we'll do work on several programs at once to find our own path on electrification for the future."

But while Moers sees electrification as inevitable, he's quick to assure AMG fans that future electric models will retain the brand's character.

"Sound is crucial to AMG, so we will find a solution," he said. "We found one with the SLS Electric Drive and we know it's important."

The 552kW SLS AMG Electric Drive, which in 2013 claimed the title as the world's quickest production electric car with a 0-100km/h sprint of 3.9sec, pumped artificial noise into the cabin during acceleration via its audio system.

What's unlikely to have a long future is AMG's mighty 12-cylinder engine. Moers confirmed that AMG's iconic 6.0-litre twin-turbo V12 is under threat due to ever-tightening emission laws.

"We do have V12 aficionados worldwide who want us to keep it, but the V12 segment no longer represents AMG as a brand. There are customers that are very interested in that engine in that exclusive segment, so we are responsible for engineering a V12 and it's up to us to give the V12 a future. But that's not decided."

Moers said recent changes to China's emissions rules have placed the V12's future in jeopardy.

"That's giving us a big headache with the V12, so it's a question of how we proceed. That's what we're discussing in the company now."

ALEX INWOOD

Get your racer on with Toyota

Motorsport is expensive, but Toyota has created a category that is, if not affordable, at least bearable. Organisers of the new-for-2016 Toyota 86 Racing Series say competitors can buy a spot on the grid for less than $70,000. That includes the cost of a race-ready 86 GT manual prepped by Neal Bates Motorsport and a five-round championship run at select V8 Supercar events, including the Bathurst 1000. If you're good enough, there's even a prize pool of $125,000, which in our maths, means you could walk away from a year's racing richer, not poorer.

Badge changes

AFTER introducing a family of AMG Sport models to rival BMW M Performance and Audi S line, AMG is dropping the badge. Future models will instead wear a 43 AMG moniker, to bring the halfway-house models into line with the rest of its nomenclature. Current AMG Sport variants have names such as GLE450 AMG and C450 AMG.

"It's a new approach for the Sport models," Moers said. "We needed more acceptance for those cars. It's important we bring them into our family; the cars stand for AMG."

The first model to wear the new badge is the V6-powered Mercedes-AMG SLC43, shown at Detroit, with the E43 to follow later this year. The 43 models fill the gap between the regular Benz range and AMG's harder, balls-out performance variants.

"There is no dilution in technology and dynamics," Moers said. "A lot of technology is the same between the performance cars and the sport models. It's another entrance store into the AMG brand; less price but still really good performance."

Next please

THE next Mercedes to receive the AMG treatment – and to utilise elements of AMG's latest cutting-edge tech – will be the new E-Class that debuted at Detroit.

The new Mercedes-AMG E63 should hit Australia in early 2017 and Moers says it will be a 430kW-plus drift monster. "It will be the biggest step forward we've ever made from generation to generation," he promised.

Power will come from a modified version of AMG's new 4.0 twin-turbo V8. Moers says it should surpass the current E63's 430kW/800Nm 5.5-litre unit for grunt. "But the 4.0-litre will be a different layout in the E-Class [to the AMG GT]," Moers said. "It's the same crankshaft and block, but the cylinder head is different and so is everything else around the engine, like the intake, manifold and intercooler."

A big change is that all that grunt won't be sent to the rear wheels only. Unlike current Aussie-spec E63s, Moers revealed the new car is likely to be offered solely with all-wheel drive. "Nobody is looking for rear-drive in that segment," he said. "We will still be able to drift that car, which is very important from my perspective."

Automatic choice

SPENDING big bucks on a performance car that drives itself sounds odd, but AMG sees potential in the next-generation of Mercedes' autonomous technology.

Debuted on the new W213 E-Class, the latest Drive Pilot system can follow another car at speeds up to 210km/h and will change lanes autonomously. It will even park itself with no one aboard and can drive itself on roads without clear lane markings at speeds up to 130km/h.

"It depends on the model and the segment," Moers says. "These [systems] aren't very important on the GT, but in the E-Class our model will have all the technology as the regular car. If the car drives by itself, why not? Then when you reach a race track, you just push a button and you drive by yourself."

REAL TIME

"We need real-world [fuel] numbers to end this ambiguous discussion … it will help us all"

Mercedes-Benz chief Dieter Zetsche commits to publishing real-world economy figures

Cops chase new cars

Hi-po SUVs on highway patrol hit list to replace Aussie V8 pursuit cars

MERCEDES-Benz, Audi, BMW, Volvo, Subaru and Volkswagen are on Australian police force wish lists as the search begins for a highway patrol car to replace the current fleet of locally produced Holdens and Fords.

SUVs are shaping as the likely participants in future high-speed chases as local police look to follow the high-riding road travelled by American cops.

The Subaru Forester tS, Mercedes-AMG GLA45, BMW X3 and Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT are all being considered following the release of a detailed set of draft "national vehicle specifications" for pursuit cars as replacements for the Commodore SS and Falcon XR6 Turbo/XR8.

Each achieves the police target of accelerating to 100km/h in less than 7.5sec while providing space for gear and people.

SUVs also provide better ground clearance for hopping median strips or driving on the verges of country roads. And the extra traction of all-wheel drive provides

Ferrari hardens up the Cali T

The Prancing Horse has sent its cheapest pony to the gym, announcing a Handling Speciale pack for the California T. The HS pack includes a stiffer ride to reduce roll, dive and pitch, sharper gearchanges, a retuned F1-Trac stability control, and a new exhaust that amps up as the front-mounted twin-turbo V8 builds revs, producing a "fuller, richer and more involving" bark. There's also matte-black visual tweaks and a plaque in the cabin to remind you that you're driving something "speciale".

reassurance – and pace – in slippery conditions.

Police insiders *Wheels* spoke to confirmed SUVs were one option being considered. Victoria Police has already purchased some Grand Cherokee SRTs for use in undercover work.

BMW produces police versions of its 2 Series Gran Tourer, 3 Series, 5 Series, X1, X3 and X5 for emergency services around the world.

"We're definitely interested in it … we are speaking to the police at the moment," BMW Australia director of corporate affairs Lenore Fletcher said. "We have many high-powered performance vehicles – including X models – that would be well suited to police work."

MB Australia senior manager of corporate communications David McCarthy said the chances of a GLA45 AMG pursuit car would depend on supply.

"If they want the cars, we have to be able to provide the volume," he said, adding that Mercedes would not produce a specific trim or tune for police. "We're not going to reduce the spec … that can have implications on used-car prices and the brand image."

Wheels understands police have pressured some manufacturers to take out luxury components to make cars more affordable, but most brands appear reluctant.

Police are also asking for modifications – including electronics, pre-drilled holes in the roof and the fitment of full-sized spare tyres – from the factory, something that may not be feasible for many models.

Police are also considering high-performance sedans and wagons for highway patrol duties, including the Volvo S60 Polestar, Audi A4/S4, BMW 3 Series and Volkswagen Golf R.

While, on the surface, the chances of a Mercedes, BMW, Audi or Volvo police car may seem slim due to their premium price tags, police are keen to consider the whole-of-life cost of all vehicles.

Given that depreciation is typically the single biggest cost of any new vehicle, some police jurisdictions are pushing their accounting departments to consider resale values, servicing costs and low fuel use, potentially opening the door to more luxurious alternatives.

As part of the draft requirements – which *Wheels* has seen – police are also probing carmakers as to "the extent that the manufacturer can modify or build vehicles to meet the draft specifications".

Overseas, Mercedes and BMWs are relatively common for police use, and BMW even has a range of 'Authority' models designed specifically for emergency services.

TOBY HAGON

Mercedes-AMG GLA45 Ford Mondeo BMW X3

Pony up? Not likely…

The Ford Mustang has been ruled out for widespread police use due to its less practical coupe layout.

While police have used two-doors in the past – think Chargers, Falcon Hardtops and Monaros – top-secret police documents call only for cars with four doors.

Copper's checklist

Preferences for the new national highway patrol car

- 4 doors
- 0-100km/h in less than 7.5 seconds
- Ability to turn ESC off
- Indicators on right-hand side
- Hand-operated park brake
- Identical tyres front and rear
- 5 seats
- Optional bullbar
- 495-litre boot space
- Ability to turn off DRLs
- Ability to disable seatbelt warning
- 4 x 25mm roof holes

Vale Paul Zacka

Former Australian off-road racing champion Paul Zacka passed away on January 1 after a long battle with cancer. 'Zoomer' was a stalwart of the Australian off-road racing scene throughout the late '70s, '80s and '90s, a hard driving competitor who tirelessly championed the virtues of Holden, and in particular the various Rodeo utes he campaigned.

Before taking to the dirt, Zacka was a successful circuit racer, memorably putting his HT 350 Monaro on pole ahead of the likes of Colin Bond and other factory drivers in the Rothmans 12-Hour at Surfers Paradise in 1970. Zacka was laid to rest in his hometown of Goondiwindi, where his family owned the McIntyre Motors Holden dealership for many years.

MORE PIE FOR MAZDA

Sales record tumbles

Toyota reigns, Mazda wins, Holden and Ford struggle

THE books have finally closed on 2015, marking the year as a big one for luxury cars, small SUVs and anything from Thailand.

It will also go down as the year the ute onslaught took a breather, with sales of pick-ups slowing as overall vehicle sales surged 3.8 percent to a record 1,155,408.

Mazda was – again – the biggest winner of 2015, adding 13,320 vehicles to its 2014 tally for 114,024 sales, cementing second place in the race behind Toyota's 206,236.

Holden and Ford had years to forget, posting record low market shares of 8.9 and 6.1 percent respectively. Holden scraped into third place and put on a brave face – "There are many positive trends and several key model lines performed strongly," Holden MD Mark Bernhard said – while Ford didn't bother.

Toyota was still dominant, although it again shed market share, down to 17.8 percent. It had more market share (18.6 percent) when it was in third place in 1996, showing how much the market has fragmented in two decades.

"Market share is not our focus," Toyota sales and marketing boss Tony Cramb said. "In the end, market share doesn't pay the bills. You've just got to hit your sales plan and we were happy with the sales numbers for the year."

Holden put on a brave face after scraping into third place

Premium brands accounted for more than 10 percent of sales for the first time – 115,000 vehicles. Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz set individual records to again dominate, the three-pointed star seemingly uncatchable with 36,374 sales, more than 11,000 ahead of second-placed BMW.

While fewer cars arrived from China (down 44.2 percent, to 2320 cars), Thailand lifted to 249,805 (up 10.1 percent). Japan remained out in front, at 335,288 (up 1.9 percent).

SUVs overall passed a new milestone in 2015, now accounting for more than one in three sales, as traditional passenger cars slumped to 44.6 percent.

Ute sales dropped 0.4 percent as the market awaited the first all-new Toyota Hilux in a decade – enabling Ford to celebrate rare good news with increased market share for Ranger.

TOBY HAGON

Ford rakes in record result

Ford Motor Company has announced a record $US7.4 billion profit for 2015, having enjoyed booming sales in every region apart from a single loss-making blip in South America. North America contributed to most of the earnings, while boom times in China pushed the Asia Pacific division (which includes Ford Australia) to a record fourth-quarter result. Ford chief financial officer Bob Shanks (right) said 2015 was the "breakthrough year" Ford promised after it spent heavily in 2014 to build new plants in Asia and bring a new F-150 pick-up to market in the US.

DEC 2015

MarketPlace

Fewer cars, more SUVs, big numbers

HIGHLIGHTS The Australian new-car market was up 3.8% for the year, buoyed by a 2.9% lift in December alone. While we bought fewer traditional passenger cars, down 3.0% for the year, SUVs have boomed 15.9% over the same period. All eyes were again on Volkswagen to see if Dieselgate would spark a buyer backlash; it didn't, with sales slipping only 1.8% for the month, and full-year sales 9.9% higher.

LOWLIGHTS Ford has closed the books on 2015 – its last full year as a local manufacturer – as one to forget, with market share falling 11% to the brand's worst sales result since 1966. Take away Ranger's 2836 sales for the month, and at 685 units the locally made Territory was the Blue Oval's next best seller. More private buyers kept their wallets in check in December, with business buyers providing the driving force behind much of December's new-car sales growth.

WINNER
75.9%
INCREASE

TOYOTA CAMRY
Toyota artificially inflates Aussie-made to best monthly sales title in the twilight of the industry, helped by sharp finance and big discounts. It also threw the carmaker's struggling parts suppliers a lifeline.

NISSAN X-TRAIL
After selling more than 2200 units in November, Nissan's small SUV fell to just 1234 units in December as key competitors, including the Mitsubishi ASX, sparked a savage price war.

LOSER
44.5%
DECREASE

TOP 20

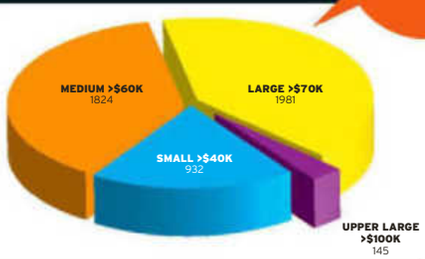
79,611

Passenger & SUV sales – December 2015

	PASSENGER CARS	SALES	RANK (NOV '15)	SALES (DEC '14)
1	Toyota Camry	5321	3	2374
2	Toyota Corolla	3469	1	3546
3	Mazda 3	3445	2	3803
4	Holden Commodore	2622	4	2210
5	Mitsubishi ASX	2066	16	744
6	Hyundai i30	1999	5	2828
7	Mazda CX-5	1917	7	1717
8	Hyundai Tucson	1672	8	–
9	Toyota RAV4	1630	11	1766
10	Volkswagen Golf	1609	9	1437
11	Toyota Prado	1184	13	1218
12	Mitsubishi Outlander	1338	25	788
13	Toyota Kluger	1328	19	1370
14	Mazda 2	1235	14	1408
15	Nissan X-Trail	1234	6	1279
16	Mazda CX-3	1207	10	–
17	Holden Cruze	1188	17	1541
18	Nissan Pulsar	1119	41	855
19	Hyundai Accent	1080	12	611
20	Subaru Forester	1014	15	1142

HIGH SOCIETY

The relative size of luxo SUV sales



TOTAL SALES

99,616

December 2015

Toyota	21,217	Honda	3318
Mazda	9708	Kia	2531
Holden	9146	Isuzu Ute	2041
Mitsubishi	7500	Audi	1988
Hyundai	7159	BMW	1702
Ford	6290	Suzuki	1509
Nissan	5012	Jeep	1295
Volkswagen	4458	Land Rover	1252
Subaru	3609	Renault	942
Mercedes-Benz	3443	Lexus	533

Incoming

MARCH-APRIL

Audi A4 Avant, RS6, RS7 and R8; BMW 750i and 750iL, M2; Kia Cerato and Picanto; Lamborghini Huracan LP580-2; Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe; Mercedes-Benz GLS; MG 3; Mini Cooper Cabriolet; Porsche 911 Carrera and Macan GTS; Range Rover SV Autobiography; Skoda Superb; Suzuki Vitara turbo; Toyota Prius

Kia Picanto

Kia plans to crack the tough micro class in March with the Picanto. Far from seeming cheap, the cheerful five-door hatch should exceed expectations with a quality, solid feel inside and out, backed up by relatively strong performance, eager steering, and a decent ride. If the refined 1.25-litre auto's driveaway pricing falls in at less than $15,000, the South Korean car might be a hit in Australia.

MAY-JUNE

Audi SQ5 TDI Plus; BMW 330e and xDrive40e, M4 GTS; Ferrari 488 Spider, F12 tdf and F12 Berlinetta M; Haval H6; Honda Civic sedan; Hyundai Elantra Sport; Infiniti Q30; Land Rover Discovery Sport Dynamic; Mercedes-Benz C-Class, S-Class, GLE plug-in hybrid; Subaru Forester tS and Levorg; Volkswagen Passat Alltrack

Land Rover Discovery Sport Dynamic

Due in May, the new version of the Freelander replacement gains a new, more aggressive styling option. Designated, "Dynamic", the harder-looking Discovery Sport adds visual highlights including black details on the body, and unique 19- or 20-inch wheels. The baby Landie also adds a version of its cruise control optimised for off-road use, as well as a launch control system for slippery surfaces.

Inbox

Keep it short and sweet (no more than 200 words) and please include your suburb if via email. You can also have your say on Facebook (search for *Wheels* Australia)

Join the Conversation

TWITTER: @WHEELSAUSTRALIA
FACEBOOK: WHEELS AUSTRALIA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

EMAIL: WHEELS@WHEELSMAG.COM.AU

C-A-R OF THE YEAR

Over the years, there have been some watershed COTY moments: Phil Scott's criteria reorganisation; John Carey's insistence on centre-rear lap-sash seatbelts; and the exclusion of vehicles without ESC. Time for another, I reckon.

Of the 25 contenders for 2016, I counted at least 10 SUVs. Yeah, yeah, I've heard all the guff; they're representative of the public's shifting motoring preferences. But that's what we're told about new-age crew cabs too. So will COTY 2020 be half utes? Don't think so. There are specialist publications for that.

Leave *Wheels* Car Of The Year for *cars*. What defines a car? Ask the manufacturer. If they call it an SUV, it's out.

Michael Mageros, Carindale QLD

PRACTICALLY PERFECT

Well done, Mazda, for making a real driver's car even better. The MX-5 is now a three-time winner of this award, and Fiat will have its copy of the car soon with a turbocharged engine.

The MX-5 was never intended to be a high-performance car, nor a practical one. It is built as a sports car designed for weekend getaways on some twisty roads.

Allan Fisher, via Facebook

PRIMITIVE LOVE

I have owned my Mazda MX-5 for five years and it still puts a smile on my face each time I turn the key; it is just such a great car. I love mine but have driven the new one and it is better; modern innovative technology has seen to that. However, the new MX-5 will be just as much a classic as the previous model.

Well done, *Wheels*, it's good to know that four-door all-wheel-drive SUVs or V8 sedans – as good as they may be – cannot disguise what good and enjoyable motoring is all about.

Phil Ross, via Facebook

TALL ORDER

I'm sure the Mazda MX-5 is a very good car to drive – it certainly looks good – however at more than 1.8m tall and 105kg I didn't take it for a test drive as I couldn't get comfortable behind the wheel.

My pick would have been the Audi Q7. It's a really impressive car, however it's not affordable to many. If they had already launched one of the 2.0-litre engines it may have been a different story.

The Jag, unfortunately, doesn't excite me.

Mark Robertson, via Facebook

COPY THAT

Smaller, lighter, better built. A simple, pure analog driving machine in 2016 when others are getting bigger, fatter and increasingly reliant on mega-computing power to keep them on the road. May the MX-5 spawn many imitators.

Richard Houlton, via Facebook

UNPLUGGED

Mazda's MX-5 seems like a deserving winner, and kind of

Write & win

Letter of the month prize

Is an SUV a car? Michael Mageros thinks it's not, and should therefore be excluded from COTY. An interesting point of view, and worthy of a free one-year subscription to *Wheels* all the same.

makes up for the crap decision last year (yep, I know, I really have to work on letting that go).

I really thought, given your apparent love of giving the award to electric cars simply because of their EVness, that the BMW i8 was a shoe-in. Thanks for proving me wrong.

Trevor Toneguzzi, via Facebook

SMALL MINDS

Why does a car with such a narrow focus and small customer base win this award (again)? There are far better all-round cars available.

The fact that these particular judges (who don't usually put thier money where their mouths are) love a two-seat sports car means nothing to me.

The market for this type of car is so small as to almost make it irrelevant to the average person who is trying to figure out which car is actually the best!

Roly Trustum, via Facebook

Wheels *Car of the Year is and always has been an award for automotive excellence. If you're after pure consumer advice, our Gold Star Value Awards has the answers you seek – Ed*

MORE TO A-DOOR

I've been thinking about what I'd like in my next car. Mostly, I just want a plug-in hybrid with sensible driving aids, like self-parking, and speed and distance management, but I couldn't help thinking of a few trivial improvements to eliminate tormenting minor irritations:

- A self-closing boot is available on at least one car I can afford, but self-closing doors are still out of my price range. I don't want them for myself, but for my friends;
- Doors that stay open when the car is facing up a steep slope. We have lots of steep slopes in Tasmania, and doors often slam shut unexpectedly, risking unwanted leg surgery;
- Doors that don't scratch adjacent vehicles. They'd need clever technology to open shy of the paintwork of the adjacent vehicle and maintain that position;
- A rear-facing dash cam able to record information like date, time, speed and the proximity of the following vehicle. I'd love to be able to send photos of tailgaters to the police.

Keith Anderson, Kingston, Tas

FIXING FORD 1

It is difficult to comprehend the lack of individual product promotion in this country by Ford given that it has some great cars sitting on showroom floors (*The Wheels Report*, January).

As we know, multi-faceted, high-impact decisions made by Alan Mulally and his lieutenants post-2008 turned around the finances of Ford globally. To outsiders at the time, witnessing company chiefs trying to push the Ford Focus into the home market under the 'One Ford' mantra must have seemed like an odd-ball idea.

But the company has survived, and the US market retains its appetite for the Ford pick-up truck; not that that narrow focus can be viewed as a saviour into the future.

Ford Australia needs some impetus with promotion. Ditch ball-sports sponsorship and concentrate on the core business. After all, isn't that the theme of their One Ford idea?

There have been some brilliant advertising schemes, but Ford's 'take it or leave it' approach to marketing does not augur well for the future, unless Ford sees our market as too small to matter.

Eric Waples, Albion Park, NSW

FIXING FORD 2

Reading *The Wheels Report* (January), you mention that Ford has an "apparent lack of interest in selling anything but a ute". You're not wrong!

Recently we were in the market for a family wagon, the specification being a large load area. We narrowed our search down to the Ford Mondeo and Volkswagen Passat.

The VW dealer staff were helpful, enthusiastic and attentive. A vehicle was available for test drive, and there were follow-up phone calls.

The Ford dealership experience was the total opposite. The 'senior sales consultant' was disinterested, and no appropriate vehicle (petrol) was available for a test drive. A promise to organise one was made, and we did not receive any follow-up contact.

VW got the sale and our money. If Ford aren't interested, then neither are we.

Kevin Loo, Calamvale, Qld

WANTING MORE

What an insightful read was *Laying it all on the table* (*Wheels*, January), but it seemed there was much more said than just one article's worth. Maybe you could have split it over a couple of issues? In any case, please consider an annual soiree with eminent car folk from the Australian industry.

Anthony Aspiridis, Thornbury, Vic

SEVENTH HELL

Extremely disappointed that the best *Wheels* could do regarding the new "state of the art" BMW 7 Series is a two-page spread and just a quarter of a page of commentary in the January edition. We wait seven years to see such a significant model upgrade, and it deserves better than a brief mention.

Howard Rose, Twin Waters, Qld

Relax, Howard; grab a whisky and turn to page 102 – Ed

Ford Australia needs to ditch ball-sports promotion and concentrate on core business

WheelStuff

CARS look good from a high perspective, and the advances in consumer drones mean they're now more affordable than a step ladder. The Alpha Drone contains an in-built low-res video and still camera in a relatively easy-to-control package – once you have your head around moving it in a 3D environment – that's ideal for snapping static or slow-moving images. Its light weight limits it to fairly still days, though.

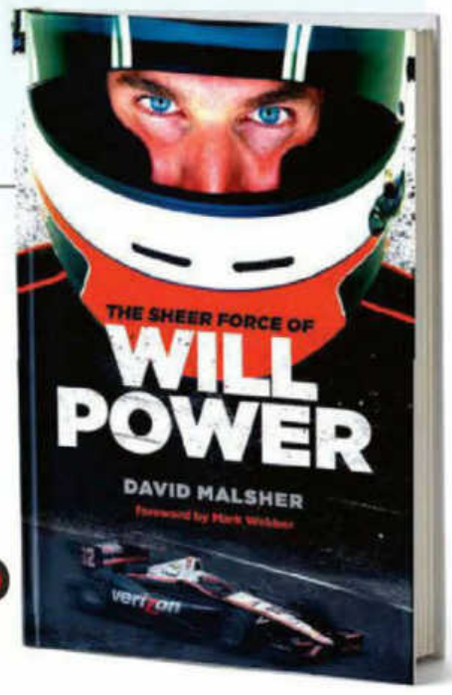
Kaiser Baas Alpha Drone $200
Kaiserbaas.com/alphadrone

THE apocalypse has never been more fun than it is in Mad Max. The vast wasteland hides a massive amount of gameplay; from building up your ride to improving Max's abilities, there are countless hours to sink in. With stunning visuals and enthralling sound effects, get ready to be sucked into the grim world of Mad Max. Part Grand Theft Auto, part Batman: Arkham City, Mad Max is all awesome.

Mad Max official game $99.95
madmaxgame.com

TAG Heuer has brought a dash of Swiss luxury to the smartwatch market with its new Connected timepiece. Developed with Intel and Google and modelled on TAG's iconic Carrera model, the Android Ware-powered watch has a 46mm digital display, 25 hours of battery life and 4GB of storage. There's also an accelerometer for tracking your steps, and Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to connect with your phone.

TAG Heuer Connected $2000
tagheuerconnected.com



WILL Power – yes, that's his real name; and the same as his grandfather's – rose from being a starry-eyed kid in Toowoomba to US IndyCar champion in 2014, with quite a few setbacks and near-titles along the way. This is the story of his incredible rise to the top, but be warned – it's not an autobiography. There's too much 'colour' from author David Malsher and lots of input from Will's wife and family, yet it's Will's own quiet voice that carries the most weight.

The Sheer Force of Will Power $39.99
harpercollins.com.au

WHO wants an ordinary metal watch when you can have one made from plasma-melted ceramic? Rado's new DiaMaster collection uses a high-tech 43mm ceramic case that looks metallic yet is harder and lighter. The dial is also unusual and boasts a design split into two sub-dials; one for the hours and minutes, the other for the seconds and date.

Rado DiaMaster Grande Seconde $3925
rado.com

The Insider

CORE VALUES

BACK IN 1985, WHEN TELEPHONES STILL HAD CORDS, PEOPLE STILL READ NEWSPAPERS AND REALITY TV MEANT WATCHING THE FOOTY REPLAY ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, MERCEDES-BENZ'S ENTIRE MODEL RANGE – 190E, E-CLASS, S-CLASS, SEC, SL, G-WAGEN – WOULD HAVE FIT IN A MODEST SHOWROOM.

Today you'd almost need an entire block on Parramatta Road because no fewer than 15 model lines now carry the three-pointed star, with more coming as the frenzied cadence of new model launches from Stuttgart continues at full throttle.

In 1985 the W124 E-Class was the core model of the line-up. Quietly elegant, deeply capable and, despite some initial quality glitches, fundamentally bulletproof, the W124 is today widely regarded as a benchmark Benz, the engineer's E-Class. But the brand-new W213 E-Class, which made its world debut at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, may prove to be no less significant.

The W213 is the centrepiece of Daimler's new MRA rear-drive architecture strategy. MRA also underpins the new C-Class and the GLC. Both those vehicles were launched before the W213, however, one constant, regardless of whether the end product is E-Class, C-Class, GLC or the forthcoming third-gen CLS, which will be the next MRA-based car – the distance from the front axle centreline to the front-seat mounting points. The apparent dimensional difference in the GLC is a trick of the tape, Kelz explains. You sit higher in the GLC, and that automatically moves the H-point forward. The floor stampings used for both the GLC and the W213 are in fact identical.

But MRA is just part of the story. The W213 also debuts an all-new electronic architecture that delivers near-autonomous driving capability; it will ultimately be used across the Mercedes range, even in the flagship S-Class.

"The classical engineering was a lot work," says Kelz, "but in the end the really major challenge in developing this E-Class was the electrical architecture, especially as it will be the basis for all the cars coming in the future."

> At first glance it would seem impossible to engineer one car that does it all, and does it all well

but when MRA was conceived it was the E-Class that was top of mind among the engineers. Why? Because no other Mercedes-Benz model has such a diverse customer base, from phlegmatic taxi drivers in Dortmund to well-coiffed Double Bay matrons and hard-driving enthusiasts in Dubai.

At first glance it would seem impossible to engineer one car that does it all, and does it all well; the demands of one customer group must surely compromise the desires of the other. Not so, says W213 chief engineer Michael Kelz: "In the end there's a benefit for every customer." The Dortmund taxi driver, he explains, gets a car that has a light and rigid body structure, while the AMG owner in Dubai benefits from components that are produced in large volumes and so are less expensive.

MRA allows components to be freely mixed and matched, cutting costs. There is,

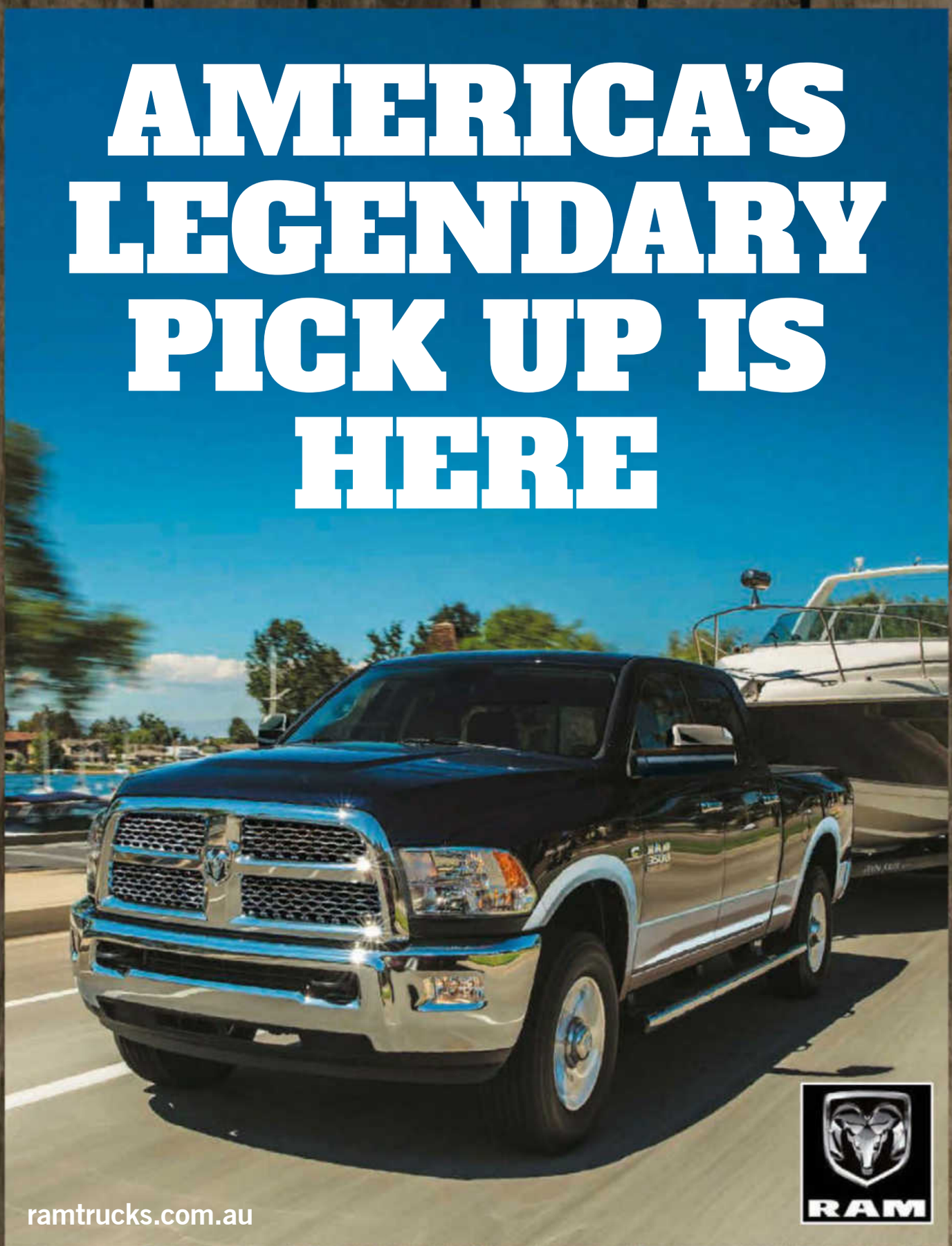
The world has changed a lot over the past 30 years. In 1985, the E-Class sedan was the touchstone Mercedes-Benz, the car that defined the very essence of the brand. Three decades later it still is.

It's business

"We have focused intensively on the trend to SUVs," says Daimler research chief Thomas Weber, "but if you look on a global perspective, sedans are still the base of mobility, especially among businessmen, and it will stay that way." Weber's point is that, while the S-Class might be for plutocrats, the E-Class is often the company car of choice for the senior managers who run their businesses for them.

HAIL AND REIGN

AMERICA'S LEGENDARY PICK UP IS HERE



ramtrucks.com.au

It's been a legend in America for over half a century. And now RAM, the legendary American Pick Up is here. Its POWER is legendary. With a 6.7 litre Cummins Turbo Diesel Engine. Its PERFORMANCE is legendary. 276kW and 1,084Nm of torque. Its TOWING capacity is legendary. Over 6 tonnes on the pintle. And its LUXURY and COMFORT is legendary. The distribution and world class conversion is undertaken by Australia's only authorised distributor and every Ram comes with a 3 year or 100,000km warranty (whichever comes first). It's what legends are made of. If you can afford one get one.

Michael Stahl

ORIGINAL SINS

YOU MAY HAVE BEEN UNAWARE OF THE RECENT ROCKETING IN VALUES OF OLD AIR-COOLED PORSCHES. UNTIL VERY RECENTLY I WAS TOO, WHICH PROBABLY SAYS A LOT ABOUT ME, SEEING I OWN ONE.

Though I'm told that my 1989 911 has almost doubled in value in little more than three years, I'm naturally way too stupid to think about cashing it in. Still, I did have a sudden urge to rush out to the garage and wash it. Which it seems might have been the wrong thing to do.

Along with air-cooled Porsches, another phenomenon in the collector car scene right now is the barn-find look. This was glaringly illustrated in January 2014 at a big-ticket Goodings auction in Arizona, where two Mercedes-Benz 300SL 'gullwing' coupes went under the hammer.

Both cars were 1956-built, both black over red leather, both had three-owner histories. The big difference was that one was in concours condition, after a guts-out restoration in 2006. The other (pictured below) looked like crap. Beneath dulled paint, its roof lining was sagging, the seats collapsed and dark from mildew, the rubbers crumbling. One report said rats were still nesting in the engine bay.

The rat-infested version fetched $US1,897,500. Plus trailer hire. The mint, restored runner drove away for half a million dollars less.

I know the adage: "It's only original once." I'm into it myself. I look admiringly at outlaws or street machines or bosozoku cars and still feel a tiny pang of regret for the 1984 Suzuki Mighty Boy within. But I draw the line at paying a premium for an inch of pigeon poop on a static display.

That's because one of the aspects of a motor vehicle's originality that I value is the fact that it was a motor vehicle.

About 15 years ago, I bought a barn-find motorcycle in Italy, with the intention of restoring it for the Motogiro d'Italia, a classic Mille Miglia of bikes. As a rusted (but complete) piece of crap, my 1954 MV Agusta cost about $650. As a beautiful restored classic motorcycle, I sold it eight years later for 10 times that. And it had given me plenty of joy along the way.

Mind you, it wasn't a Bugatti.

The best example of leaving well enough alone is the 1925 Bugatti Type 22 Brescia that had lain for 75 years at the bottom of Lake Maggiore, on the Swiss-Italian border. It was brought to the surface in 2009, quite the worse for wear, and sold at auction for $US360K, equivalent to a collector-quality Type 22. Its new owner displays it exactly as found, its gauges still filled with lake water.

But the Bug and my bike had at least one thing in common. Like so many barn finds, both had been hidden from the tax man. There's mystery over the Bugatti's original owner, the more romantic version having the car won in a Paris poker game from Bugatti racer Rene Dreyfus. What's certain is that the owner didn't want to pay Swiss import duty, and so tried to suspend the car beneath a pontoon in the lake. Turned out to be more like a 'bottom of the harbour' scheme.

> A phenomenon in the collector car scene right now is the barn-find look

Barn finds are also about money. They're being bought by investors, not enthusiasts. The big question right now is when, or even if, the investment bubble will burst. Assuming it does, the only people who'll still be interested will be enthusiasts – people who put driving ahead of avarice, and avian excrement.

Classic catches

Do you like the idea of buying a modern classic with price-rise potential?

If I weren't so wed to my Weissach wunderwagen and were starting out again, I'd be looking closely at: BMW E36 M3s (above), currently around $15-25K; Mazda NA MX-5, around $5-12,000; and – no kidding – an original '64 Ford Mustang, in left-hand drive from $30K upwards.

READY FOR TAKE-OFF

MAN LIKE HORSEPOWER

VALVOLINE SYNPOWER
flows faster to all parts of the engine
for the power man instinctively craves.

SYNPOWER.COM.AU

Apple, the Apple logo, and iTunes are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. iTunes is for legal or rightholder-authorized copying only. Don't steal music.

David Hassall

THE RISING SON

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FATHER AND SON CAN SOMETIMES BE COMPLEX, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY WORK IN THE SAME BUSINESS. THE WARM AND TENDER UPBRINGING MANY OF US TAKE FOR GRANTED WAS NOT ALWAYS EVIDENT TO THE LIKES OF JFK, EDSEL FORD AND KERRY PACKER.

That whole routine of pushing the youngster out of the nest and into the big wide world to make their own mark must take on an extra dimension when you're in the same domain.

Imagine then a Japanese father raised during the war and brought up with discipline and austerity, a son the product of the 1960s and a free-thinking artist. That they had disagreements is not such a surprise, but they have something quite wonderful in common – they are both influential car designers, and the son is on the verge of continuing the legacy of an often disapproving father.

Matasaburo Maeda is the long-retired designer of the original Mazda RX-7, the now classic rotary-engined sports car that holds mythical status in the world of Mazda. His son is Ikuo Maeda, who has risen to be the company's head of design and who has long harboured a dream to revive the RX-7. Not because of his father, but because he is a car enthusiast.

It says much as the father-son relationship that Ikuo went off to design college and bought as his first car an RX-7 – without even realising his father had created it while the young man was still living at home. He bought it simply because he liked the shape and it was fast. It's no coincidence that Ikuo's nickname is Speedy.

Similarly, when Ikuo was chosen to design the so-called 'successor' to the RX-7, his father only found out three months before the four-door RX-8 went on sale in 2003.

I had the pleasure of sharing dinner with Ikuo during the launch of his Mazda 2 in 2007 and he revealed that he and his famous father had opposite views on car styling and often argued. "We decided early on not to talk about styling, otherwise there would be arguments," he explained sadly. "We still don't talk about it."

Ikuo describes his father's design philosophy as "quiet and sleek" while his is "dynamic and full of movement; he pursues forms that are stable, whereas mine are all about instability and fluidity". The young man – I can't believe he's now 56 – is a bit of a rebel still, a racer at heart, though now a senior executive of a highly respected car company.

Although Ikuo professed eight years ago to be unconcerned about the lack of parental approval, in a more reflective moment he revealed a desire to design a new-generation RX-7, with two seats and a rotary engine. He said he hoped his father would like it. If he didn't have a tear in his eye, I certainly did.

I didn't see Ikuo again until a few years ago in a quiet corner of the Paris motor show, where he charmingly pretended to remember me. I reminded him of our conversation and he said of the RX-7: "It is still my dream. When we make the money, I will be able to spend the money."

> Maeda said he hoped his father would like it. If he didn't have a tear in his eye, I certainly did

So it was with considerable delight that I saw the RX-Vision revealed at the Tokyo motor show in November. Ikuo stood alongside it on the stand, looking deservedly pleased with what will surely be the realisation of his long-held dream.

I hope his father is proud.

David Hassall is a veteran motoring writer and is sub-editor of Wheels. *For more on Maeda, turn to page 78.*

Worlds apart

MATASABURO Maeda looks like any other retired Japanese businessman headed for the golf course, but in the world of Mazda the former design chief is revered.

Now 82, Matasaburo recalls that his work was arduous, and that he never took it home with him. That would explain how little his son knew of his work, even though he recalls people named Giugiaro and Bertone visiting the house. But as a youngster Ikuo had little interest in cars; he was more interested in architecture.

Ikuo has made Mazda a style-driven brand. His design philosophy is opposed to his father's, which is rooted in engineering, but he's impressed his dad became a car designer when this job description didn't exist in Japan. "He was ahead of his time," Ikuo concedes.

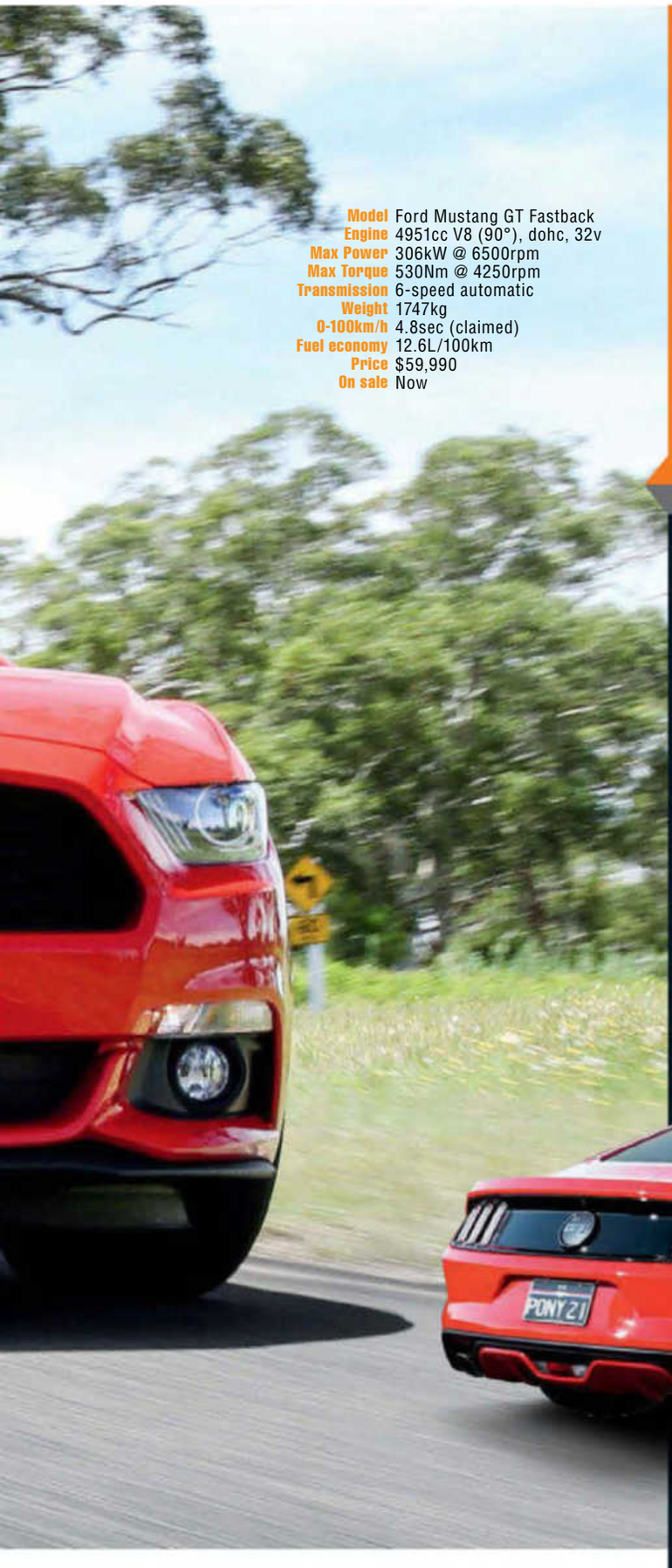
— sanctuarycoveboatshow.com.au —

Firstdrives

THIS MONTH'S FRESH METAL

PAGE 74 HEAD TO HEAD: HOLDEN ASTRA GTC SPORT v KIA CERATO KOUP TURBO TOURING

54 RENAULT MEGANE | 60 FORD FOCUS RS | 64 TESLA MODEL S P90D



SPECS

Model	Ford Mustang GT Fastback
Engine	4951cc V8 (90°), dohc, 32v
Max Power	306kW @ 6500rpm
Max Torque	530Nm @ 4250rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Weight	1747kg
0-100km/h	4.8sec (claimed)
Fuel economy	12.6L/100km
Price	$59,990
On sale	Now

FIRSTDRIVES

Ford Mustang

Long-awaited pony car is not perfect, but it's surely irresistible

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

THE only potential problem with a growing wave of anticipation and expectation is the chance it can crash against the rocks of reality, leaving a trail of disappointment and a forlorn chorus of, "Is that it?"

Few cars have risked this as much as the new Mustang, one of the most hyped and anticipated cars in recent years. We've cheerfully been a part of that, deeming it cover-worthy on three occasions since January 2014, and devoting some 27 pages to it over the same period.

So now it's here, and we've driven it on local roads in both body styles and all powertrain configurations. Is it good? Hell, yes. But is it brilliant? A true Blue Oval game-changer? Well, let's not get ahead of ourselves...

We learned from Ponch's Stateside drive in late 2014 that it's a car brimming with character and the kind of desirability that only comes when you've officially hit icon status. What wasn't completely clear was how specifics of suspension tune, wheel and tyre combinations, and right-hook configuration, would translate to Aussie roads. Finally we have those answers.

But first, have a look at the thing. Seriously. If the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, then surely the

thoroughfare to a car enthusiast's main aorta is via the eyeballs. A performance car needs to seduce you visually before it charms the pants off you with dynamic prowess.

On this score, the Mustang lands a direct hit. This is a brilliant reinterpretation of the original's design language – a squinty-eyed, bulging-haunched head-kicker that creates a sweet harmony out of tension and aggression. The artful sculpting of the bonnet bulge is a thing to behold, both as you approach the driver's door and from inside the car. The tail-lights, comprising vertical LED bars inside slotted perspex blades, are a gorgeous nod to the '68 Fastback. Punters honk, wave and shout approval. That's life in the icon lane.

All Aussie Fastbacks, regardless of engine, roll on vast, staggered 19-inch Pirelli P Zeros: hefty 255/40s up front and whopper 275/40s out back. Convertibles make do with 255s on all four corners.

Roof up, the Convertible loses the elegant roofline sweep of the coupe, serving up more of a notchback profile that, to my eye, is a lot less desirable.

Punters honk, wave and shout approval. That's life in the icon lane

In the interests of working up the range, we start off in what I'd respectfully suggest is the least blokey variant, an auto Convertible powered by the engine expected to take only about 10 percent of initial sales, the 2.3-litre Ecoboost four.

Fed by a twin-scroll turbo, it makes a peak of 233kW, with max torque of 432Nm at 3000rpm. But 90 percent of this torque peak is available at just 1720rpm, so it's terrifically eager, not too boosty-feeling if you select the Normal drive mode, and doesn't shy from being worked hard.

In fact, it needs to be whipped along to let you get involved. Below about 4500rpm, it's too quiet and a bit characterless, despite the (questionable) inclusion of a 'sound symposer' set-up that pipes engine noise through the audio speakers.

Pull the shifter back into the Sport mode and get stuck in and there's ample enjoyment to be had; the auto holds the lower of its six ratios right up against the 7000rpm limiter and a rorty sound fills the cabin. It's a curious note, not typically turbo four-pot; it's more warbly and slightly out of phase, like someone's dangled a mic near something with Cosworth on the cam covers.

There are three steering weights to choose from, but no surprises that the middle Normal setting is the most fluid and feelsome. The thin-rimmed wheel connects you to a front-end that's both responsive and super-grippy but, as will be revealed, noticeably short of the resolution and iron-fisted tenacity possessed by the Coupe.

The Convertible was developed alongside the hardtop, naturally, and gets a decent serve of stiffening additions, but the net result is nothing groundbreaking on Aussie roads.

It should be explained at this point that all Australian-spec cars come standard with a variation of the optional Performance Pack offered in the US, part of which includes stiffer springs, firmer dampers and thicker anti-roll bars.

This seems questionable on the Convertible, given the target market, because this combo surely contributes to a slightly too-reactive ride, along with a steady flow of minor tremors that ripple through the body and set the rear-view mirror quivering away busily over anything less than glassy bitumen.

Open-road cruising is perfectly pleasant, though, even if the absence of any wind-management

02

BOOT STORE
01

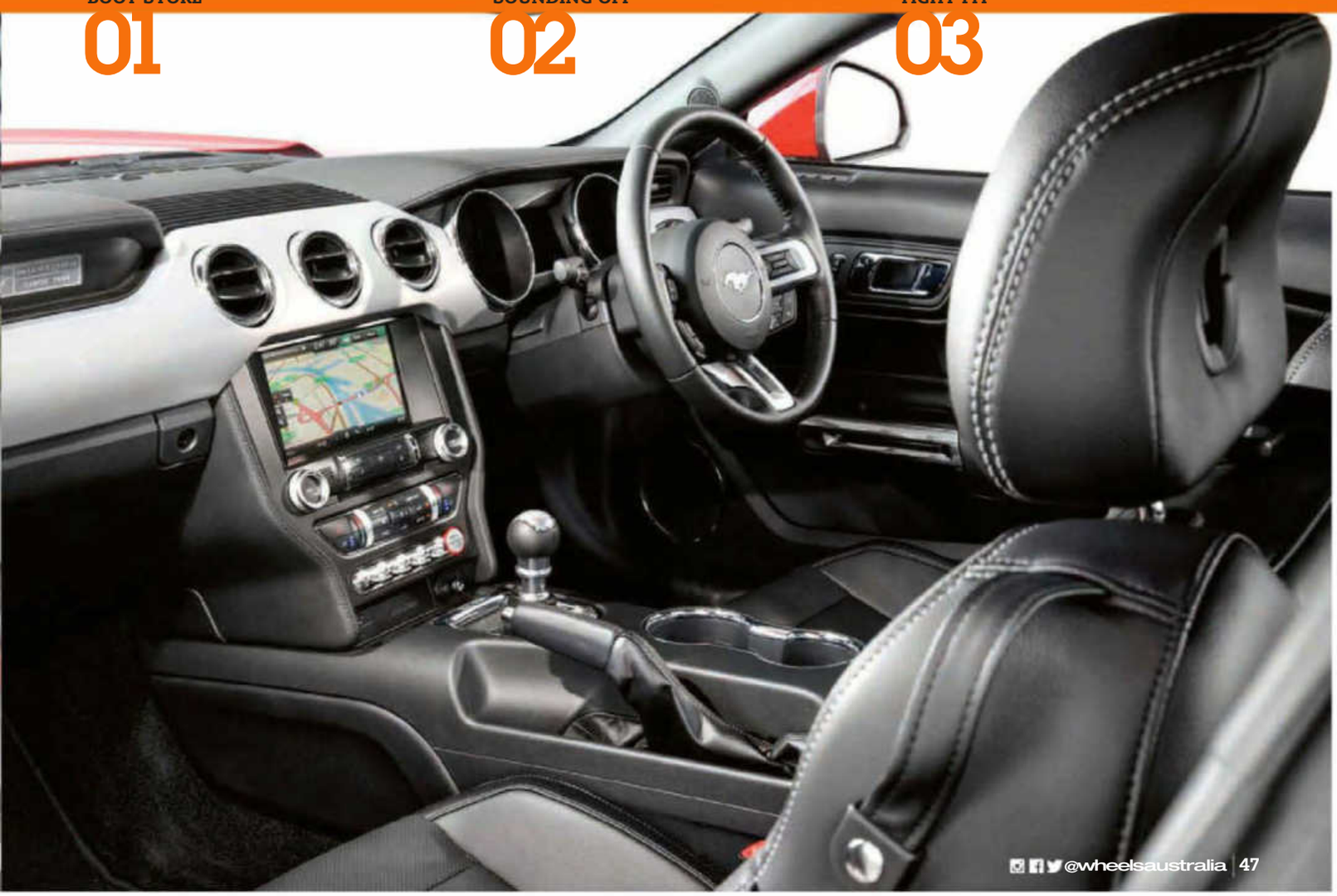
Boot capacity is 324 litres, which Ford says is good for two golf bags, but a fairly narrow aperture means anything will have to be slotted in, letterbox-style. It's adequate for a couple of overnight bags, but won't be much help if you're at Bunnings. At least the rear seats fold to give a bit of porthole effect for long items.

SOUNDING OFF
02

From the outside, there are no Maserati-style aural fireworks, no flamboyant cracking and popping on lift-off. We would have much preferred a switchable bi-model exhaust over the largely pointless switchable steering weights.

TIGHT FIT
03

Strictly small kids-only in the back, and even then front occupants will have to concede a little travel to allow that to happen. Front seats are heated and ventilated, with generous side support, but may be a little short under-thigh for tall drivers.



system means a fair degree of swirling, disturbed air in the cabin at freeway speeds.

Cruise mode also allows our attention to be drawn to a few misses in the right-hook cabin execution. The indicator stalk has been moved to the right-hand side, but the centre console remains unchanged, so the handbrake is located next to the passenger and the deep bottle-holders leave your beverages sticking up right where your arm needs to be to change gears in manual models. Better to drink in the mostly agreeable retro ambience, admire the real aluminium that clads the instrument panel and try to ignore some of the cheaper switchgear and hard plastics.

Jumping into a manual V8 Fastback doesn't change any of the ergonomic glitches, but it does let you revel in the full-fat Mustang experience as properly intended. The throttle tips in with total precision, the V8 snarls via proper induction ducting piped from behind the dash (not the aural smoke-and-mirrors of the four-pot), and the medium-weighted clutch bites with mush-free progression.

Only an excess of driveline shunt mars the manual experience. There's a dull thud with each first-to-second shift that sounds like a fat man being kicked in the bum, which could get tiresome in traffic. The shift action has a nice mechanical feel and the gates themselves are tightly spaced. And what a pleasure to be connected to a linear, eager, atmo V8.

The manual coupe's 0-100km/h time (4.8sec) is nothing to sneeze at, but on the road the performance feels swift rather than holy-crap fast. That's more a product of the twin-turbo grunt-monster world in which we now live than any real shortcoming of the Ford V8, although its quoted outputs are down a bit compared to LHD cars (see sidebar below). The important thing is there's ample power to get the most out of a cracking chassis.

The jiggly, lively ride of the Convertible is less of an issue in the coupe, especially when the trade-off is such great body control and general harmony of front and rear ends.

Aim hard at an apex and there's one small shrug of bodyroll before a generous grip envelope opens up, urging you to push harder. Nudge that limit and the independent rear is instantly involved, blotting up mid-corner bumps, tracing a tight line and, under big throttle inputs, squatting and edging wide with total progression.

We used Race mode on the circuit and found it allowed some slip, though not as much as I imagine many would like. The chassis is sufficiently benign and transparent to allow ESC off without the threat of tank-slapper hell being unleashed.

Front brakes on the GT Fastback are whopper Brembos clamped by six-piston calipers, and while the initial pedal action feels too sensitive and over-servoed, they bite hard and feel capable of withstanding a proper pounding.

For many customers, an auto four-pot convertible at $54,990 could be all the Mustang they really need, even if it may not be the Mustang they really want. The entry-level manual Ecoboost Fastback, at $45,990, is really just dangled as showroom bait, while the value equation of the V8 Convertible (auto-only at $66,490) starts to head south. That leaves the choice between GT Fastback manual ($57,490) and GT Fastback auto ($59,990).

Either way in the Mustang's case, expect that wave to be one of delight, not disappointment.

ASH WESTERMAN

The V8 snarls, unlike the aural smoke-and-mirrors of the four-pot

PLUS & MINUS

Very firm ride; Convertible rigidity; both engines need to be louder

Knockout styling; generous grip; fine dynamics; sane pricing

Who stole our power?

Plenty of you will have noticed the outputs of our Aussie-spec Mustang GT's V8 are down on what we've previously quoted for US-spec cars.

Aside from differences in measuring methodology between Oz and the US, we're told that it's primarily due to changes to the manifold needed to package the engine for right-hand drive. Consequently, our V8 makes 306kW, down 18kW on LHD-market cars, while torque is down 12Nm to 530Nm.

A raft of upgrades were developed for the 302, which is essentially an upgraded version of the special-edition 2012 Mustang Boss 302. It runs new heads with a straighter flow path to larger intake and exhaust valves, which in turn run stiffer valve springs for more precise closure at high revs. Both camshafts are new, with the variable camshaft timing on the intake side now delivering a greater range of adjustment thanks to mid-lock phasers. New forged rods are lighter, while redesigned piston tops feature deeper cut-outs to clear the larger valves.

The folding stuff

The convertible's roof requires you to manually unlatch the leading edge from the header rail, which is no real hardship. An adjacent switch then allows the electric motor to take over, retracting the roof in a swift seven seconds.

Two areas are not well executed, though – the roof can't be raised or lowered on the move, and two plastic filler panels have to be manually slotted in to cover the apertures that house the roof's folding mechanism. These are fiddly to fit, have no designated storage spot and will inevitably be lost or broken. Without them, though, the roof-down appearance is unfinished and the gaps they expose will be prone to filling with leaves and crap.

OR TRY THESE...

Holden Commodore SS-V Redline

$54,490

Mustang GT's nemesis (if you ignore the Falcon XR8), with similarly outstanding rear-end power-down and involvement. The Redline is a ripper car, but familiarity, and four doors, diminish its cool factor.

Volkswagen Scirocco R

$45,990

About as close as spiritually possible to being a rival for the Ecoboost Fastback, even though the Scirocco R is front-drive. It's no prude though, with lots of sweetly throaty grunt and an entertainingly adjustable tail for handling fun.

Range Rover Evoque

Vital new diesel meets sexier styling

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

THE Poms' brand divergence is definitely working. While some feared that the soft-roading Evoque might erode the reputation of Land Rover's imperious Range Rover line as masters of high-riding, high-fashion 4WDs, the result has been the exact opposite. The Evoque's role as a fashionable foil for the more uncompromising Rangie and Rangie Sport is unquestioned.

For 2016, it has been treated to techy new lights, new multimedia, lusher trims, tastier colours, a reshuffled model line-up and a brand new turbo-diesel engine.

The $51,995 Pure eD4 remains (as a 5dr-only, manual-only starter with a 110kW/380Nm Ingenium diesel), the sole front-drive Evoque. The AWD SE (replacing Pure Tech) is available in Td4 150 (110kW/380Nm) and Td4 180 (132kW/430Nm) turbo-diesel tunes, while the HSE (replacing Prestige) and new HSE Dynamic get the Td4 180. The HSE trim lines are the only variants offered on the 3dr 'coupe', while the carryover 177kW/340Nm turbo-petrol Si4 engine is offered across SE, HSE and HSE Dynamic models, solely with a nine-speed auto.

With the MY16's striking full-LED headlamps and shapely running lights, the HSE Dynamic really steps up its game as a tantalising flagship – especially when sporting optional 'Adaptive Dynamics' suspension ($1850) and Black Design Pack ($4650). As an SUV for affluent hipsters, it does a great job combining guard-filling 20s with robust damping that absorbs big hits effortlessly.

What doesn't gel so sweetly is the 177kW turbo-petrol and nine-speed auto combo. The engine has plenty of spirit, but it feels laggy off the line, then chirps the front tyres before drive is channelled to the rear. More progression in its response would be welcome.

Far more pleasant is the 132kW diesel. There's still a bit of lag from standstill, but it's strong enough to start in second gear, and will pull from as low as 1250rpm without gasping for boost. It shuffles through its vast ratio set smoothly and scores an impressive 5.1L/100km fuel number, though the front-drive manual's 4.3L/100km is seriously brilliant. As is the Ingenium diesel's incredible two-year/34,000km service interval.

While the SE 180 diesel on 18s can't have the HSE Dynamic's optional dampers, it's still capable of dynamic reward. Quick steering, neat balance and a decent ride aid agility, but the ESC is a little too keen on intruding.

For all its airs and graces, there's something refreshingly egalitarian about the Evoque. At base level you get a surprising amount of car for the money, while at the upper end, only a Porsche Macan can match its style and class.

NATHAN PONCHARD

Ingenium petroleum

While many have wondered why it has taken so long for Jaguar-Land Rover's new Ingenium engine line-up to come on stream, replacing the diesel first was definitely a savvy move. Right now, the Evoque and Jag XE are the only two models with Ingenium (diesel) power, though the Discovery Sport will follow during the last quarter of 2016. The turbo-petrol Ingenium will eventually surface in all three, as well as the new-gen Jag XF, but that's unlikely to happen in Oz before 2017.

PLUS & MINUS

No turbo-petrol manual; tight rear seat; fiddly transmission dial

Handsome and alluringly customisable; new diesel; ride quality

Model Range Rover Evoque HSE Dynamic Td4 180
Engine 1999cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo-diesel
Max power 132kW @ 4000rpm
Max torque 430Nm @ 1750rpm
Transmission 9-speed automatic
Weight 1674kg
0-100km/h 9.0sec (claimed)
Economy 5.1L/100km
Price $76,995
On sale Now

Model	Porsche 911 Carrera 4
Engine	2981cc flat 6, dohc, 24v, twin-turbo
Max power	272kW @ 6500rpm
Max torque	450Nm @ 1700-5000rpm
Transmission	7-speed manual
Kerb weight	1480kg
0-100km/h	4.1sec (claimed)
Economy	7.9L/100km
Price	$233,900
On sale	Now

Atmo noise will be missed; tiny amounts of lag; still too expensive

PLUS & MINUS

Power; economy; styling; all-wheel grip; steering; speed; legendariness

Porsche 911 Carrera 4

Turbo tweaking continues with AWD variants

FIRST OVERSEAS DRIVE

TO THE Porsche obsessed, it can feel like the things that made the 911 legendary are being stripped away, one at a time; perfect hydraulic steering, the manual gearbox, naturally aspirated engines, the flat-six's unique metallic atmo howl.

Yet demand for the iconic sports car is so high that Porsche is talking about putting on a Saturday shift at the factory, so it appears buyers are willing to accept less tradition in exchange for more power, higher speeds and lower fuel numbers and emissions.

The new Carrera 4 is the first of the turbo-tweaked 911s I've had the chance to drive and my first impression is not good. The new door handle – now "without finger plates", whatever that means – feels thin and lacking in Porsche heft. Let's hope it's just a gram-saving measure.

Everything else feels familiar, except the new touchscreen, which looks better and leaps to life when you so much as wave your finger towards it.

There's no denying the new engines look impressive on paper, or stopwatch, with the downsized 3.0-litre now making 272kW and 450Nm in the basic all-paw model and 309kW and 500Nm in the 4S, which can now sprint to 100km/h in 3.8sec (an improvement of 0.3sec, while the Carrera 4 slices off 0.4sec for a 4.1 dash, both faster than the RWD versions).

All that performance comes with a claimed fuel economy figure of 7.9L/100km, which sounds like witchcraft.

The extra 60Nm (plus 15kW) both engines gain from turbocharging should cancel out the dreaded lag, and in our drive around the fearsome Kyalami circuit in Johannesburg, it certainly feels like it.

At full pelt, the Carrera 4 is a hugely capable track car – fast enough to scare you, particularly the 4S – with prodigious grip from its new electro-hydraulic traction management system.

On a track, at constantly invigorating revs, the turbo whistle is almost inaudible and the much-loved boxer bark still in evidence. Head out on the road, however, and there's a lack of aural stimulation at leisurely speeds, with just the slightest hint of lag from low revs.

In a manual, or in the fun mode of PDK, this is cancelled out by grabbing a lower gear, which is never a chore, and there's no suggestion that either the new Carrera 4 or 4S are slow. They're just… different.

Would you still pay $233,900 for the 4 (or $269,000 for the 4S) if you could afford it? Absolutely. But if you've got an old non-turbo version, you might want to hang on to it, because you can be sure Porsche purists are going to make them collector's items.

STEPHEN CORBY

Play partner

Bringing it into line with other brands like Hyundai, the new 911's PCM 4 connectivity system allows owners to use Apple CarPlay, but Android phone users are out of luck.

Global research shows that some 80 percent of Porsche customers use Apple products, which is why they don't feel the need to support Android Auto, despite the fact that other Volkswagen Group vehicles do.

Whether the Apple/Porsche synergy is an indicator of inherent stylishness or just an older buyer profile was not mentioned in the research.

Model	Haval H8 Lux AWD
Engine	1967cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo
Max power	160kW @ 5500rpm
Max torque	324Nm @ 2000-4000rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Weight	2175kg
0-100km/h	11.0sec (estimated)
Economy	12.2L/100km
Price	$48,990
On sale	Now

PLUS & MINUS

Harsh ride; heavy and lumpy steering; large turning circle

Excellent fit and finish; roomy cabin; generous equipment level

Haval H8

Chinese newcomer aims high, doesn't quite get there

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

STEREOTYPES are common in this business. German cars have the best perceived quality; French cars are the most chic; Japanese are reliable; Australian cars are sturdy. Chinese cars are not seen as quality, chic, reliable or luxurious, yet that's exactly the pitch Haval is making with its range of SUVs, headlined by the H8.

The H8 is the Chinese carmaker's challenger to the Toyota Kluger and Mazda CX-5, two of Australia's most popular SUVs. We're the first export market for Haval, which is owned by Great Wall, and the H8 is first cab off the rank for its three-model SUV launch line-up.

This big SUV is 4.8 metres long, with a monocoque chassis, and is loaded with equipment. The handsome exterior, which looks like a blend of previous-generation Mercedes ML with a few Volkswagen Touareg overtones thrown in for good measure, has genuine presence and appeal. It looks the business on its standard 19-inch alloys, with excellent detailing, fit and finish.

Climb in and there's equipment-list overload. Caramel leather covers seats that offer endless electric adjustment, plus (optional) heating, cooling and massage functions, while the door trims, grey marbly applique and dash top are generally convincing.

However, there are a few detail inconsistencies that undermine Haval's premium-SUV positioning. The 8.0-inch centre touchscreen's graphics look dated, and while the beautifully textured rotary dial for the sunroof is clearly from the school of VW, the plain, shiny black power window buttons look and feel generic. There's no digital speedo, a foot-operated park brake and the cruise control stalk is hidden behind the steering wheel.

Driving the H8 backs up that feeling of it being 'nearly there'.

It's powered by Haval's own 160kW 2.0-litre turbo-petrol four-cylinder, and while the engine has a smooth idle that develops a bassy tone under load, its progress is adequate, not grunty.

Throttle response at slow speed reveals a long pedal, but even after a stab, the throttle and six-speed auto can't answer fast enough, with lag that makes gaps in traffic a no-go. Below 2000rpm, where the peak 324Nm kicks in, the H8 struggles. You can't spontaneously flick the shift paddles, either, until you've moved the centre shifter into manual mode.

Around town, the ride is too firm to qualify the H8 as a premium SUV, catching every surface change and bump, and its body control reveals its 2175kg heft by pitching and rolling too much into corners.

Add to that steering that's flaccid on-centre, weights up excessively and is heavy around town, and the H8 feels large. A 12.2m turning circle only underlines that.

It's not all bad news, though. The H8's fuel economy on test with 98-octane was 11.1L/100km (better than its 12.2L/100km official figure), despite lacking idle-stop, and while there is wind whistle at speeds beyond 60km/h, overall refinement is otherwise reasonable. There's also loads of space in the second row, with ISOFIX child-seat mounts, a 60/40 split-fold seat and a decent boot area. The standard 10-speaker audio system rocks too.

The H8 is not convincing as a premium SUV, but it shows Haval has genuine talent that will only improve from what is a reasonable base. It should break the Chinese stereotype. Trouble is, with such a competitive Australian market, a product that's almost there may find it tough alongside so many well-executed competitors.

DAMION SMY

01 ON THE LEVEL

You may not have heard of Haval, but if you know anything about cars, you'll know ZF. It supplies the self-levelling suspension that's standard on the H8, that raises the car, from rest, automatically. It works via a pump on the rear axle in place of conventional dampers.

02 YES, CAPTAIN

Haven't driven a car before? No problem. To entrust you with 2.2-tonnes of metal and plastic in a public space, there's a voice that tells you which way to turn the steering wheel when you select reverse. That's correct: it tells you how to reverse park…

03 100% AUSSIE BEEF

The leather that covers the seats and doors in the H8 isn't from China, but from Australia, says the company. It's not bad but lacks the smooth, textured finish of other luxury brands, despite having perforated centre panels.

Lofty ambition

Haval officially launched here in November 2015 with three models: the entry-level H2, which sits between the Mazda CX-3 and CX-5 in terms of size; the H8 tested here; and the ladder-chassis, off-road-centric H9 (above) that will be aiming to lure buyers away from Toyota Prado and Ford Everest. The first factory-distributed Chinese brand in Australia, Haval kicked off with four dealerships and should have six by the time you read this. It has ambitious plans to reach 25 Australian dealers by the end of 2016.

OR TRY THESE…

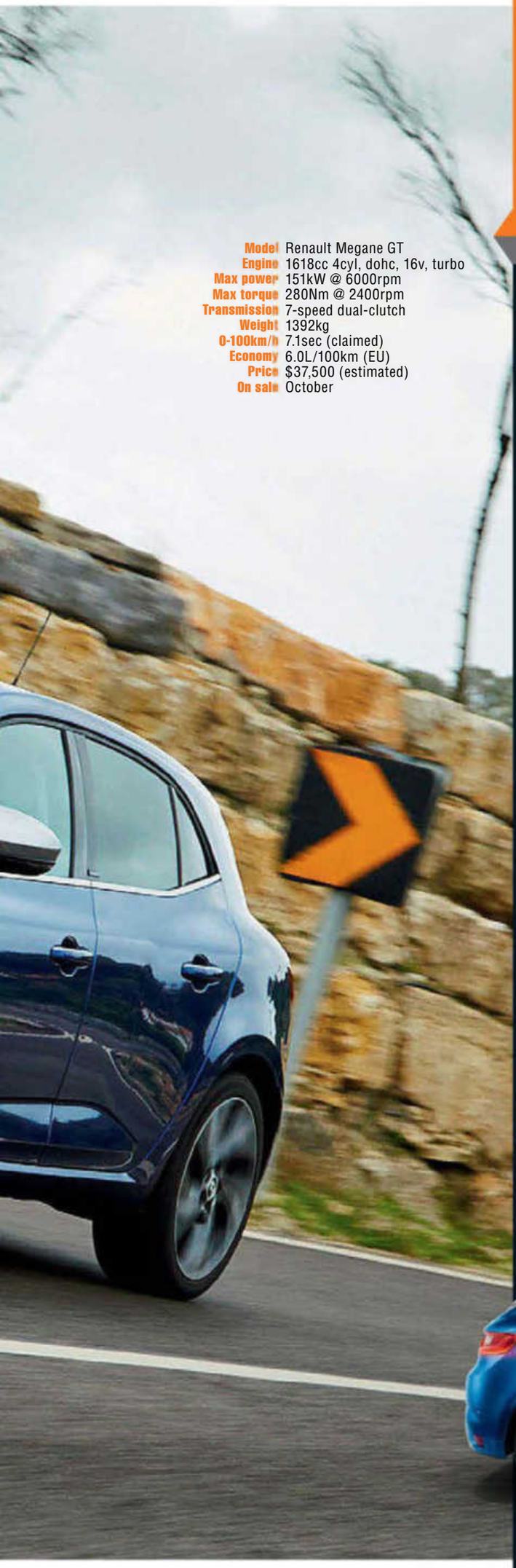
Mazda CX-5 Akera
$47,410

The best-selling SUV in Australia, and for good reason. The sharply styled CX-5 has car-like dynamics, excellent fit and finish, and highly efficient engines. Great resale value bolsters an already compelling case.

Kia Sorento SLi AWD
$49,490

A *Wheels* comparison test winner, the Sorento AWD diesel has excellent build quality, a class-leading seven-year warranty and a five-star safety rating. While talent is up, so is the price: it's no bargain.

W-268-GE
92



Model Renault Megane GT
Engine 1618cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo
Max power 151kW @ 6000rpm
Max torque 280Nm @ 2400rpm
Transmission 7-speed dual-clutch
Weight 1392kg
0-100km/h 7.1sec (claimed)
Economy 6.0L/100km (EU)
Price $37,500 (estimated)
On sale October

Renault Megane GT

So the French understand evolution as well as revolution…

FIRST OVERSEAS DRIVE

THERE'S a lot of space (and plenty of Espace) in the new Megane GT. The fourth generation of Renault's C-segment hatchback has grown in almost every direction, creating a car with a wider cabin, more rear-seat knee room and one of the biggest cargo compartments in its class.

Nothing unusual so far, but the source of the hardware that sets the sporty GT apart from more mundane Meganes is surprising. Its drivetrain, steering rack and steering rear axle all come from Renault's big new crossover.

Like the Espace, the new Megane is built using the Renault-Nissan Alliance's CMF (Common Module Family) component matrix. CMF is obviously a fairly flexible system; the crossover's wheelbase is more than 200mm longer than the hatch's.

The Espace is built only in left-hand drive, yet the ambidextrous Megane uses the same steering ratio and rack-mounted electric-assist system. It gives the GT 2.3 turns lock-to-lock instead of the 2.9 of standard models. The Megane GT's '4Control' rear axle, a torsion beam with a 30kg electric micro-steer system, likewise comes from the Espace. For the Megane GT, it's retuned by Renault Sport for handling agility, not just a tighter turning circle.

The GT's 151kW 1.6-litre turbo-petrol is practically identical to that in the Clio RS200. But Renault Sport exec Regis Fricotte says the GT's drivetrain is most closely related to the Espace, which uses the same seven-speed dual-clutch transmission. The hot Clio has instead a six-speed dual-clutch.

While the ways in which the GT

Devalued decisions

NEW Megane's list of active safety and driver assist tech is long for a C-segment hatch, as Renault proudly points out. But the declining purchasing power of our dollar may affect Renault Australia's ability to bring everything. Here's what they have to pick and choose from: autonomous emergency braking (works from 30 to 140km/h); adaptive cruise control; rear-view camera; lane-departure, blind-spot and safe distance warning systems; auto-dipping headlights; front, rear and side parking sensors; park assist system; and a colour head-up display.

PLUS & MINUS

Numb steering; hesitant dual-clutch transmission; ergonomic irritations

Exterior and interior design; ride comfort; refinement; engine

differs from other Meganes are important, so are the things it has in common; stand-out exterior style and an inviting interior.

The new Megane's longer, wider, lower dimensions must have helped, but Renault's designers deserve credit for the car's stance and shapeliness. It's especially attractive from the rear, a view that emphasises the body's broad shoulders and distinctive LED lighting strips.

High-grade Meganes (the only kind at the international launch in Portugal) will come with an instrument panel featuring a Volvo XC90-like portrait-oriented touchscreen in its middle. The second thing you notice, after the display, is the huge step forward Renault has made with interior design and quality. This is a cabin that stands comparison with the best in class.

But it's not perfect. The steering column-mounted controls are a long way from ergonomic excellence. Rear access could be easier, with only a narrow gap between B-pillar and seat base for getting feet in and out. And, as with so many modern designs, the angle and thickness of the A-pillars hinder vision.

It feels well balanced to the point it pushes gently into understeer

There's stuff to praise, as well. The driving position is fine, as are the GT-specific Alcantara-trimmed front sports seats. The glovebox is usefully big. And that portrait screen makes car set-up – and Renault does give the picky driver a lot of choices – relatively painless.

Chief engineer Fabrice Garcia says ride comfort was a priority during development of the new Megane. Even with its stiffer springs, firmer dampers, more rigid anti-roll bars and low-profile 18-inch tyres, the GT is smooth and supple for something sporty. Quiet, too.

It also feels agile, thanks to the direct steering and the 4Control rear axle. In Sport mode, the rear wheels steer counter to the fronts up to 80km/h. In Neutral and Comfort modes the GT makes an earlier switch, at 60km/h, to stability-enhancing same-direction steering.

Sport mode also reduces the level of steering assistance, but does nothing to alter the system's numbness. Still, the GT is prompt and precise in its responses to inputs. And the car feels well balanced up to the point it pushes gently into understeer.

The engine is sweetly refined, nicely muscular and with a pleasantly raspy top end. But the new-generation Megane isn't significantly lighter than the old one, meaning the 1.6-litre turbo delivers brisk rather than brilliant performance.

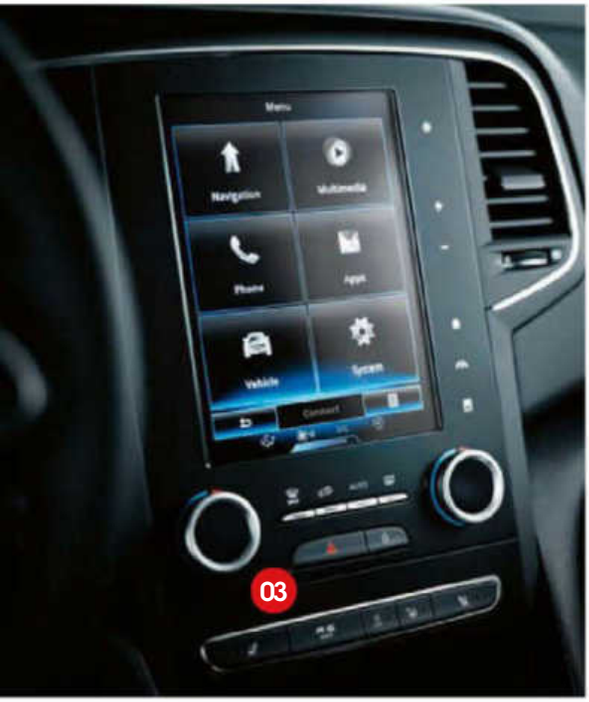
The seven-speed dual-clutch transmission, which Renault labels EDC, does not seem able to read both the driver's mind and the road ahead the way the DSG in Volkswagen's Golf GTI can do. It's okay in Neutral or Comfort, but in Sport – which alters both throttle and transmission mapping – it can be hesitant.

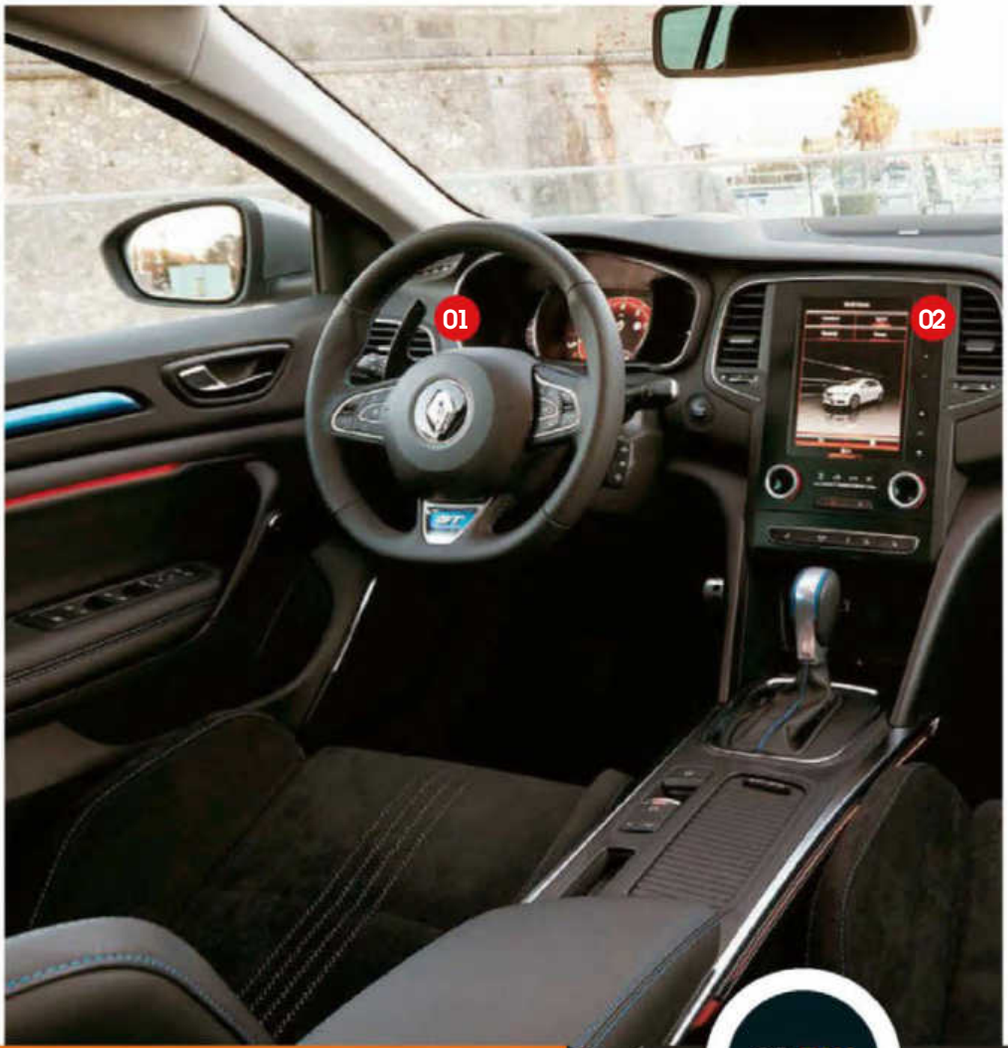
Still, the GT does promise a better basic Megane. The style and space are giant steps in the right direction, as is the emphasis on quality, refinement and comfort. And Renault's decision to include a full suite of up-to-date active safety tech, including autonomous emergency braking, is a wise one (see sidebar).

With the local launch of the new Megane scheduled for the second half of 2016, Renault Australia is still months away from finalising specification and pricing. What they do know for sure is that the launch line-up will include a 97kW 1.2-litre turbo-petrol four teamed with six-speed manual and seven-speed dual-clutch transmissions, plus an EDC-only 81kW 1.5-litre turbo-diesel four.

Priced right – say from $21,000 for the base petrol manual to around $37,500 for the GT – Renault Australia should find there's space enough for the new Megane in one of the market's most crowded segments.

JOHN CAREY





ERGO NO-GO

01

Ergonomic error area: Megane GT's paddle shifters should extend lower than they do, wands aren't user friendly, and Renault just won't give up on the horrid little column-mounted audio system control carbuncle it's been in love with for 20 years.

TOUCH AND GO

02

'R-Link 2' portrait-oriented 8.7-inch touchscreen will set high-grade Meganes apart from less costly versions. It's easy to use, too. Menus are well structured and it responds to smartphone-style swipes and pinches. Base cars will have a landscape-format 7.0-inch screen. At least it's colour…

PUSH TO GO

03

RS Drive button gives instant access to the Megane GT's Sport mode, which affects the engine, transmission, steering assist and rear-steer system. Selection of other inbuilt modes – Neutral (start-up default), Comfort and driver-customisable Perso – requires only a tap on the touchscreen.

OR TRY THESE...

Peugeot 308 GT
$41,990

The new 308 at its most handsome, but like its Megane namesake, the GT isn't an all-out hot-hatch. Still, it handles with enthusiasm, has terrific sports seats and an inviting interior. Pity about the (switchable) synthesised induction note.

Mazda 3 SP25 Astina
$35,040

With a 138kW atmo engine and an excellent six-speed manual gearbox, the Mazda is a more organic warm hatch than the tech-heavy Renault. But it only really comes alive when driven hard, and its cabin lacks the richness of the French pair.

Lexus RC200t

Smaller engine provides greater appeal

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

A BARRAGE of new Lexus models have hit local showrooms in the past year, with the RC200t the latest salvo. Lexus reckons it can lure BMW 4 Series and Mercedes C-Class coupe buyers with this cheaper and more efficient entry-level two-door.

The rear-drive RC200t starts at $64,000 – less than the BMW 428i and Mercedes C250 Coupe – yet it's only $3K less than the RC350, and that comes with a 233kW/378Nm 3.5-litre V6 compared to the 200t's new 2.0-litre turbo-petrol four, which delivers 180kW/350Nm.

The price difference between the four-pot and V6 is consistent across all three RC200t trim levels, which start with the Luxury we're driving here, then F-Sport and flagship Sports Luxury. So there must be something special for the 200t to be that price, right?

Equipment levels are near identical to the V6, the most significant omission being the 350's rear-wheel steering. Our Luxury-spec RC200t test car wore 18-inch alloys and even sported the same black claw marks on the rear bumper.

There's also little difference when you slide into the RC200t's spaceship-like cabin with its excellent driving position and leather upholstery. That is, until you fire it up.

At idle, the four-cylinder is near silent, and there's no fuss as you accelerate serenely around town. This is where the RC200t is the pick, with greater refinement and a more progressive throttle than the V6, bolstered by a 7.3L/100km fuel number (against 9.4).

Plant your right foot and response is an adequate, obedient march rather than a sporty, aggressive shove, even in Sport mode. The 7.5sec 0-100km/h claim is hardly slow, but the 200t is no traffic-light maestro.

The eight-speed auto is also mild-mannered, failing to make the most of the 350Nm (spread from 1650 to 4400rpm). Approach a twisty section of road and kickdown is lethargic. The auto upshifts at 6000rpm (6200 in manual mode) as the torque wedge peters out, though the Manual mode's extra 200 revs allows earlier downshifts, as the computer otherwise prohibits such loutish behaviour.

Tackle a bend and the front-end lacks sharpness and accuracy, with turn-in needing a good chunk of lock before the steering weights up, the front treads quickly taking over roadholding duties. That said, change of direction is well managed, even if the RC200t picks up every mid-corner undulation. It rides better around town, where it feels supple and well sorted.

That's the RC200t's forte: stylish urban touring. It sits uncomfortably close to the 350's price, but is the most liveable daily driver in the Lexus RC range.

DAMION SMY

Spoolin' around

The 1998cc four-cylinder turbo, codenamed 8AR-FTS, made its Lexus debut in the RAV4-based NX SUV last year; now it's offered in the GS sedan, IS sedan and RC coupe. In all four, it makes the same 180kW/350Nm and is mated to an eight-speed auto. If you compare the RC200t directly to its sedan counterpart – the IS200t – it carries 55kg more weight, yet somehow uses 0.2L/100km less fuel and costs $6500 more. It's expected to be the most popular RC model, making up 40 percent of an estimated 80 sales per month.

PLUS & MINUS

Only $3K less than the V6; heft over IS sedan; lacks rivals' dynamics

Unique style; excellent attention to detail; engine and cabin refinement

Model Lexus RC200t F-Sport
Engine 1998cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo
Max power 180kW @ 5800rpm
Max torque 350Nm @ 1650-4400rpm
Transmission 8-speed automatic
Weight 1725kg
0-100km/h 7.5sec (claimed)
Economy 7.3L/100km
Price $64,000
On sale Now

Model	Lexus GS200t F-Sport
Engine	1998cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo
Max power	180kW @ 5800rpm
Max torque	350Nm @ 1650-4400rpm
Transmission	8-speed automatic
Kerb weight	1725kg
0-100km/h	7.3sec (claimed)
Economy	8.0L/100km
Price	$83,000
On sale	Now

PLUS & MINUS

Dated interior; base-car cabin feels low-spec; only two trim levels

Engine and cabin refinement; fit and finish; far superior to the old V6

Lexus GS200t

New turbo spells the end of another atmo

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

EVERYBODY'S doing it – Ferrari, BMW, even Porsche. Downsizing, that is. So when Lexus decides to put a turbocharged four-banger in its BMW 5 Series-size GS sedan, it shouldn't come as much of a shock.

The GS200t's 2.0-litre turbo-petrol is an absolute peach. While it makes the same power as the RC200t, its refinement and buttery-smooth character suit the GS's premium mantra perfectly.

Lolling about town, the refinement of the engine isn't immediately obvious because it's so quiet. In fact, you needn't bother with the hybrid GS; the near-silent operation of the 200t is remarkable.

At $75,000, the Luxury spec is the entry point for the two-tier line-up, which is headlined by the larger-wheeled, more aggressively styled GS200t F-Sport at $83,000.

The GS has a spacious cabin, with solid, well-finished materials that look a little dated, highlighted by a dreaded foot-operated park brake that lowers the tone.

Yet the depth of the GS200t's talent stretches from around-town limousine-like refinement to a dynamic ability that's pleasantly surprising. The ride on the F-Sport's 19-inch alloys may not be as silken as the driveline combo, but the GS's cornering abilities reveal an agility that's completely unexpected.

The steering doesn't offer a lot of feedback, despite the chassis communicating the surface beneath, but the roll into corners is well controlled and overall handling is benign and predictable, with strong roadholding allowing a concerted attack through any corner.

Part of this car's dynamic ability is courtesy of the new 'performance damper' fitted to all GS models, which better isolates the front-end, while there's also revised spring rates and a new shock absorber piston shape, all aimed at reducing NVH.

When pushed, the 2.0-litre livens up, with good response, but it's more a flow of power than a strong surge, and the eight-speed automatic upshifts briskly and smoothly at 6000rpm. The engine note builds, but even under full load it maintains its hushed composure, never over-reaching to become coarse, nor showing signs of struggle.

Its 7.3sec 0-100km/h claim is a whopping 1.3sec quicker than the GS250 V6 that this car replaces, and its 8.0L/100km economy is significantly better than the V6's 9.3L/100km as well.

The $75K starting price is almost $3K more, but there is more gear, including a Pre-Collision Safety System. With all that refinement and polish, the GS200t won't have you rushing to your destination, but it fulfils its premium brief well.

DAMION SMY

Tough times

The GS will face increasingly tough opposition in 2016. The new-generation Jaguar XF, which is not only a dynamic dream but far more opulent than its predecessor, will be keeping Lexus salespeople awake at night. But the real nightmare will be the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class that arrives in October, taking over the role of Merc's techno tour-de-force from its S-Class flagship. And before the year is out, an all-new BMW 5 Series and Audi A6 are expected to be unveiled before arriving here in 2017.

D
K EZ 700
RS

Model	Ford Focus RS
Engine	2261cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo
Max power	257kW @ 6000rpm
Max torque	440Nm @ 2000-4500rpm
Transmission	6-speed manual
Weight	1599kg
0-100km/h	4.7sec (claimed)
Economy	8.1L/100km
Price	$50,990
On sale	Mid-2016

Ford Focus RS

Bargain-priced hyper hatch

FIRST OVERSEAS DRIVE

CAN they read the smoke signals rising from Spain as far away as Germany? Source of the smelly haze is the Focus RS noisily scribing sideways circles in a car park behind the pit area of the Circuit de Valencia. Drift Mode is the Ford's spectacular party trick – a world-first – with purpose-developed drivetrain, ESC and chassis calibration intended to unleash the Ken Block that lurks inside all of us.

Drift Mode's effectiveness is attention-grabbing, but it's not what Mercedes-AMG and Audi's quattro division should be worried about. What must instead concern them is the way this all-wheel-drive Ford delivers stellar performance and handling at a price that reads like a misprint.

There's a delicious harmony to the way the $50,990 Focus RS drives that's lacking in the A45 and RS3. Both the Mercedes-AMG and the Audi are well in excess of $20,000 more costly than the Ford, but neither can match the fluidity and cohesion of its dynamics.

The Ford's snarly 257kW Ecoboost 2.3-litre four-cylinder turbo, a close relative of the same-size engine in the new Mustang, delivers a lovely and linear surge of thrust. It may not produce quite as much power as Mercedes-AMG's 280kW 2.0-litre turbo four or Audi's 270kW 2.5-litre turbo five, but the RS does have a drivetrain that more than compensates for the shortfall.

Bolted to the gearbox of the Focus RS is a simple power take-off unit for the propshaft to the rear axle. There's no central differential or Haldex-style inter-axle clutch. Instead, the rear drive unit in the Ford's aft axle is home to a pair of multi-plate clutches. The left- and right-side clutch

packs' electrically powered hydraulic actuators can be individually controlled. This component, supplied by Brit drivetrain specialists GKN, is the car's not-so-secret weapon.

It's perhaps the chief reason for a couple of the Focus RS's almost miraculous abilities. When cornering, the rear drive unit can channel significant torque to the outside rear wheel, practically exterminating that joy-killer called power-on understeer. From a standing start, the system can lock both clutches to deliver truly awesome traction.

Achieving a good 0-100km/h time was important to Ford, and the claim of 4.7sec is impressive. Though realistic, it's half a second shy of the A45. But as Ford Performance vehicle engineering manager Tyrone Johnson points out, in the Mercedes-AMG, Launch Control must be selected to ready its seven-speed dual-clutch for access to the car's full potential. The Focus RS, which has a six-speed manual, is always ready to give its best, he says.

But this isn't the reason a manual was chosen for the Focus RS, the engineer explains; it was the manual's weight advantage compared to any kind of auto. A prime program objective was to minimise understeer, so having about 30kg less mass over the front axle was irresistible.

And the Focus RS is superbly understeer resistant. Its electric steering rack – quicker than Focus ST, just 2.0 turns lock-to-lock – highlights the car's fabulous agility. Slight torque steer can sometimes be felt, but its direct and well-weighted steering is one of this Ford's best attributes.

The brakes aren't bad, either. Big front discs clamped by fixed four-piston Brembo calipers do a great job of shedding speed. They only began to wilt a little after nine hard Track-mode laps of the Valencia circuit.

What didn't change during those laps was the Focus RS's unwavering composure. It turns better into corners, and drives earlier and harder out of corners, than any obvious competitor.

These same qualities make the Ford a formidable car on the road. Its ride in both default Normal and selectable Sport modes, which use the same softer setting for the two-stage variable dampers, is firmly disciplined, but not unbearable. Only Track mode engages the stiffer damper setting.

The Focus RS has few weaknesses. Its interior fails to convey the same visual excitement as the exterior, its thirst will be heavy when driven hard (it flashed an 80km-to-empty warning on the circuit with the fuel gauge showing above half full!) and its turning circle, like any other Focus with large wheels, is atrocious.

But this new Ford is a case of where there's smoke, there's a fiery new challenger for the hyper-hatch crown.

JOHN CAREY

PLUS & MINUS

Interior; thirst when performance is exploited; turning circle

Engine; steering; brakes; grip; handling; price

Ford Performance has a new and exclusive relationship with Michelin. The standard tyre is 235/35ZR19 Pilot Super Sport. Same size but stickier Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres on lighter forged rims will be a $2500 option in Australia.

Aggressive nose houses the biggest intercooler Ford Performance engineers could make fit. Grille mesh design maximises airflow. Ducts beside the fog lights feed cool air to the front brakes.

Spoiler is designed to kill lift. Lower down, the RS's diffuser helps cut drag. Cd is 0.36 – not great, but slightly better than the previous Focus RS from 2009.

PILOT BUILD **01**

INTER ALIA **02**

SPOILER ALERT **03**

No love for A45

Tyrone Johnson doesn't hesitate when asked if his team intended to produce a Focus RS that could take on the likes of the A45 AMG. "Yes," he replies. But then the Ford Performance vehicle engineering manager doesn't have a very high opinion of Mercedes-AMG's hot hatch. "I have one in my department, but it's got a dust layer about that thick on top of it," Johnson says. "No one drives it any more. No one enjoys it. It's fine for transportation, but that's it."

OR TRY THESE...

Mercedes-AMG A45
$77,900

It has a classier interior, for sure. And a bigger maximum power number too. But the Focus RS is arguably a better drive, with handling that appears to set a new class benchmark. Bring on the comparo!

Volkswagen Golf R
$52,740

Focus RS is slightly cheaper than the Golf R, but its ability is in a much higher league. The Ford has loads more power, and knows exactly what to do with it. But only the VW offers a two-pedal option, if that's your thing.

Tesla Model S P90D

Elon amps it up to Ludicrous levels

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

THE first time you double-tap the cruise control to switch on the Autopilot system of Tesla's Model S is an act of blind trust.

You're putting yourself in the hands of the coding skills of Elon Musk's best and brightest.

The steering wheel begins making tiny adjustments of its own accord, the instrument panel draws a lock on the vehicle ahead, and you can take your hands off the wheel and relax. You *can*, but Tesla doesn't recommend this, covering itself by claiming you should keep your paws resting on the tiller at all times.

The thing is, Autopilot seems so bloody good that, after a short while, you gain faith. The way it scribes an arc around sweepers without pinballing from left to right within its lane is hugely confidence-inspiring, as is the way the radar cruise control holds station with traffic up the road, the distance driver-selectable.

What's not quite so reassuring is the way the lane-change system lets you move just slightly too far to the edge of the next lane before it catches the car and straightens up. Here in Australia, we don't get the US-spec ability to just click the indicator with the car doing the rest of the lane change. You'll need to put a tiny amount of pressure on the steering wheel, which is awkward, especially as a fraction too much makes the car think you're trying to retake control and switches the Autopilot off.

Autopilot engaged, it's easy to be lulled into thinking you're in some omnipotent form of automotive higher intelligence, only to realise that it won't slow down for revised speed limits or traffic lights. It's easily flummoxed by the weak link behind the wheel too. With the indicator on the left and the similar (non-detented) column shift on the right, it's all too easy to accidentally flick it into neutral and find yourself flatlining but going nowhere.

Autopilot's not perfect and customers have to assume liability when using it, but having tried it for a week, it's something you really would use on major roads. I still have nightmares about some villain with a pot of white paint sending Teslas whistling off into the undergrowth, though.

The self-parking system is another jaw-dropper. Unlike most vehicles, which require you to operate the throttle and brakes while they automatically twirl the wheel, the Model S can now perform the whole show, right from identifying a space to shuffling you into it, leaving a scant few millimetres from kerbing those big alloys.

Which brings us to the 'Ludicrous' performance mode, Tesla's next step after 'Insane'.

Bring the twin-engined, all-wheel-drive Model S P90D to a standstill, grip the wheel and stamp the right-hand pedal; it's that straightforward. The mute violence of what happens next is hard to comprehend. It's as quick to 100km/h as a McLaren P1.

This otherworldly combination of theme park ride and airline turbulence is initially panicking. It feels as if the fluid in your brain has sloshed and pooled in the back of your skull, and your guts get squeezed like you're wearing a g-suit. Everyone who sampled it for the first time came away feeling slightly nauseated, the lack of audible cues or let-up in the seamless surge of torque serving to utterly scramble the senses.

You do get used to it, though, and begin searching for pole position at the traffic lights. A couple of seconds or so after they turn green, you already have a hundred metres of clear road. Now there's a contribution to safety we can all get behind.

ANDY ENRIGHT

PLUS & MINUS

Wide pillars; feeble headlights; poor interior storage; expensive; gadgetry

Devastating pace; refinement; ease of use; space; gadgetry

Model	Tesla Model S P90D
Motors	193kW front motor, 375 kW rear motor
Battery	90kWh lithium-ion
Max power	568kW
Max torque	967Nm
Transmission	1-speed fixed gear
Weight	2127kg
0-100km/h	3.0sec (claimed)
Range	480km
Price	$215,937
On sale	Now

01 STEER CLEAR

The P90D has three steering settings: Comfort, Standard and Sport. The car feels optimised for Standard, with Comfort offering almost zero feedback through the wheel and Sport making the helm feel as if it's trying to escape the Boston Molasses Disaster.

02 THEM'S THE BRAKES

Select maximum brake regeneration and you can drive the Model S largely with just the throttle pedal. Roll off the juice and it'll decelerate firmly, with brake pedal intervention required only to come to a full or sharp stop. The regen' braking does activate the brake lights.

03 DORK CONVERTER

The P90D is full of nerdy tricks. Hold down the Tesla logo on the screen and type '007' when prompted for an access code and the car's on-screen image turns into Bond's submersible Esprit (which Tesla mastermind Elon Musk owns).

Charge account

The Model S P90D is a series of upgrades to the P85D. The upgrade from 85 to 90kWh costs $4500 and increases range by six percent. Autopilot software is another $3800. Ludicrous mode? That's $15,000. This features main battery-pack contacts made of Inconel super alloy that increases the current-flow rate from 1300 to 1500 amps, and a smart fuse for the battery. This fuse has its own electronics and a tiny lithium-ion battery built into it that smooths the step between normal and peak operating currents.

OR TRY THESE...

Porsche Panamera S e-Hybrid

$285,300

Give range anxiety the flick with Weissach's leviathan 3.0-litre V6 hybrid. Economy of 3.1L/100km and 0-100km/h in 5.5sec make for convincing counterpoints.

Aston Martin Rapide

$378,500

Two choices here. Buy the sonorous Rapide right now for some prehistoric V12 goodness or wait for the moral rectitude of the all-electric RapidE version.

Mitsubishi Pajero Sport

Challenger replacement a smooth operator

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

WITH the Outlander taking on soft-roaders such as X-Trail, RAV4 and the like, Mitsubishi was able to retain a proper body-on-frame design for its Challenger replacement, the Pajero Sport, which it claims is the most technically advanced off road-capable SUV it has produced.

Those words might be robustly discussed by some – a three-link live axle is hardly the last word in tech, especially when big brother Pajero had all-independent suspension 15 years ago – but adding refinement and polish, and a suite of chassis and safety electronics, to a tried-and-true chassis package makes for a fine all-rounder.

A surprising inclusion is an eight-speed automatic. Teaming it with the new 2.4-litre turbo-diesel provides a confident and competent driveline. And, unlike some lots-o-cogs transmissions, the calibration allows the torquey diesel to be assertive in its search for, and holding of, top gear. For those who wish to play, there are column-mounted paddles as well as +/– at the shifter in the high and hard-edged centre console.

Seating is cloth in the GLX, leather in the GLS and Exceed variants (Exceed also scores a rear-seat DVD and the full suite of safety electronics such as blind-spot monitoring, low-speed collision mitigation and what's called a Multi-around View Monitor system). The rear seat might be a little tight for taller teens, but the split-fold seat tumbles forward easily to increase the useable load area.

Our test drive included a burst on the dunes north of Newcastle and a good dose of wheel-lifting off-road, which the Sport spanked. As before, Mitsubishi's drive system allows 2WD and full-time 4WD operation, but new is a multi-mode function that provides Gravel, Mud/Snow and Rock settings from a console-mounted button.

On-road, it's a serene and quiet cruiser, though there's more wind rustle around the A-pillars and mirrors than you'd expect of an all-new design. Top gear and 110km/h sees less than 2000rpm on the tacho, which sits in a simple and concise cluster.

We didn't get to drive any twisty gravel roads, but suspect it would not live up to either its Pajero or Sport badges; it feels set up for comfort, not speed. The rough-road noise isolation and NVH seems to be pretty good but there's a little too much buzz and kick up the steering column on patchy bitumen or forest tracks.

Minor – and subjective – criticisms aside, Mitsubishi looks to be onto a good thing with its new Challeng…err…Pajero Sport. Keep in mind it gives away two seats to, say, Fortuner, but it's a well-equipped, sharply priced and rugged, if ungainly, all-rounder.

GLENN TORRENS

Made for seven

Despite its new-for-Australia name, the Pajero Sport shares nothing with its bigger brother Pajero. Like the two generations of Challenger before it, the Pajero Sport is built on the separate chassis of the Triton ute.

For now it's a five-seater – like the Challenger – not seven as offered by other brands. However, this new generation is designed for three-row seating so expect an announcement soon that Mitsubishi will also be making a seven-seater.

PLUS & MINUS

Lumpy styling; on-road dynamics; wind noise; back seat a little tight

Willing diesel; well-calibrated eight-speed auto; off-road prowess

Model	Mitsubishi Pajero Sport Exceed
Engine	2442cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, TD
Max power	133kW @ 3500rpm
Max torque	430Nm @ 2500rpm
Transmission	8-speed automatic
Kerb weight	2070kg
0-100km/h	11.5sec (estimated)
Economy	8.0L/100km
Price	$52,750
On sale	Now

Model	Honda CR-V DTi-L
Engine	1597cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, TD
Max power	118kW @ 4000rpm
Max torque	350Nm @ 2000rpm
Transmission	9-speed automatic
Kerb weight	1754kg
0-100km/h	10.2sec (claimed)
Economy	5.9L/100km
Price	$44,290
On sale	Now

Heavy and vague steering; heavy-footed ride; lacks handling poise

PLUS & MINUS

Gutsy, refined and efficient diesel; nine-speed auto; nicely packaged

Honda CR-V DTi-L

Updated SUV scores a limited-run turbo-diesel

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

HONDA'S fourth-gen CR-V has never been a favourite of ours. Developed during a GFC-rocked economy and lacking the dynamic and mechanical sparkle that once signified every Honda, this 2013 debutant demonstrated the depressingly low priority the Japanese brand placed on engineering prowess during that period.

But things are changing, slowly. Last year's Series II update brought some much-needed, though minor, suspension and steering improvements to the current CR-V, but it's the 'limited edition' turbo-diesel version that provides an encouraging glimpse of a brighter Honda future.

The new CR-V diesel centres around the debut of an 'Earth Dreams' 1.6-litre turbo-diesel four, replacing the previous i-DTEC 2.2.

Backed by Honda's all-new nine-speed automatic, the little 1.6 diesel defies its midget status. Despite a sizeable capacity drop, it produces more power (118kW, up 8kW) and the same torque (350Nm) as the old 2.2 diesel, with the added benefit of improved refinement and less thirst (down from 6.9 to just 5.9L/100km).

Even though the transmission possesses a seemingly ludicrous number of ratios, you'd really never know. Smooth, intuitive and efficient, the nine-speed gives the CR-V diesel a real kick off the line, and the legs to extract the greatest efficiency from highway running.

It's a pity the diesel's new space-age gear selector is such a fiddly, gimmicky and plasticky piece of tat. It's a classic case of form over function compared to a traditional, leather-topped lever.

Then there's the dynamics. Improved they may be, but that's very faint praise. Instead of overly light and vague steering, the CR-V diesel's is almost heavy, feeling like it's turning through treacle, yet still vague. It's a textbook case of how adding steering weight does not 'create' feel.

The old CR-V's nauseating ride is now less sickly, with improved body control and damping effectiveness. Yet the sense that the CR-V's heavy wheels are out of phase with its suspension tune still exists. So does its ponderous front-end, which rolls more than the rear, detracting from its handling poise. In most situations, CR-V's chassis still lacks cohesion.

Unlike the old diesel, the 2016 version is a top-spec-only proposition available in very limited supply. Just 90 will be imported from the UK (the petrols hail from Thailand), restricted by an increasingly unfavourable exchange rate, yet loaded with more kit than any CR-V in the catalogue. And as I write this, 74 have already been sold.

Thankfully, its talented diesel drivetrain will resurface in the much tastier HR-V later this year.

NATHAN PONCHARD

Holding fort

Given the excellence of Honda's new diesel drivetrain, we'd ignore the CR-V and wait until it lands in the HR-V in the last quarter of 2016. Tied to both a six-speed manual (yay!) and the new nine-speed auto, the diesel HR-V is likely to be the pick of Honda's small-SUV line-up. If we get the same tune as the Europeans, expect 88kW/300Nm and a 0-100km/h time of 10-dead. Significantly less weight also means the HR-V diesel can achieve a combined fuel economy number as low as 4.0L/100km.

Model	Kia Sportage Platinum GT Line
Engine	2359cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v
Max power	135kW @ 6000rpm
Max torque	237Nm @ 4000rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Weight	1716kg
0-100km/h	10.5sec (estimated)
Economy	8.5L/100km
Price	$43,490
On sale	Now

PLUS & MINUS

Cartoonish nose; cedes drivetrain tech to its Hyundai Tucson relative

Well-proportioned shape; impressive dynamics; quality cabin

Kia Sportage

Ever-improving Korean SUV demands even more respect

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

CAST your mind back to the flimsy, uninspiring SUVs that once wore the Sportage badge and the increasingly uttered "Geez, Kia has come a long way" has never been more applicable.

The outgoing third-generation Sportage (from 2010) had already covered solid ground, boasting core qualities of generous equipment and keen pricing alongside newer ones such as Euro-sharp Peter Schreyer styling, locally tuned dynamic smarts, and a seven-year warranty.

The all-new, fourth-generation Sportage builds on the body solidity, adds to the superseded model's interior appeal, polishes its steering and handling, and comes wrapped in convincing Cayenne-spiced styling, though the 'Tiger Nose' snout is a matter of personal taste.

It still champions equipment and value, but ride quality on tuned-for-Oz suspension (and 19s on the flagship Platinum) takes a much-needed step up.

A change to Korean production after the third-gen's mid-life switch to Slovakian supply revives the 135kW 2.4-litre direct-injection petrol four, but also brings a cheaper 114kW/192Nm 2.0-litre multi-point unit with lower outputs than the previous GDi 2.0-litre. But fuel consumption improves by around a litre to 7.9L/100km, despite kerb weight increases of more than 100kg.

The 2.0-litre is flexible and refined – there's not much engine, tyre, suspension or wind noise, other than some exterior mirror rustle – but the 2.4 is the better petrol engine, offering 237Nm and pairing agreeably with the range-issue six-speed auto. However, it's only available in Platinum spec.

By the time you get to the glamorous and enviably equipped range-topper, you might as well opt for the stout 136kW/400Nm 2.0-litre turbo-diesel, which is AWD-only across the three variants. A great modern oil-burner, it's a refined, immediate and efficient performer, offering consumption of 6.8L/100km, which also brings a boost in range from the 62-litre tank.

A decent electric steering system – tautened by switching from Normal or Eco to Sport mode, along with the throttle and transmission calibration – and disciplined dynamics (strut front suspension and redesigned multi-link rear) ensure a level of driver appeal that's beyond standard SUV fare.

There's space to sprawl in most directions on the comfortably angled rear seat, and the adjustable backrest angle, rear air-con vents and 12V and USB sockets add to the appeal of riding in the second row.

It's remarkable how comfortably the Platinum tackles poor Aussie backroads, even on GT Line 19s. The big wheels, powered panoramic sunroof and sports package set off the flagship, which may have tyre-kickers enquiring which Euro brand is responsible.

The Platinum (from $43,490) shares LED running lights and tail-lights, tyre-pressure monitors, front parking sensors, leather, a 10-way powered driver's seat, auto wipers, sat-nav and dual-zone air-con with the SLi (from $33,990) but adds a stack of safety and convenience gear.

Even the $28,990 front-drive entry-level model ($33,990 for the diesel) is endowed with cruise, a rear camera and parking sensors, auto headlights and Bluetooth/iPhone-compatible audio with a 7.0-inch colour LCD touchscreen and steering-wheel controls.

Long equipment lists, among other persuasive strengths, are nothing new in a Kia, but the Sportage wasn't always this great to drive or nice to own.

JAMES WHITBOURN

Flagship safety

Sportage's extensive active safety suite is limited to the top-shelf Platinum model. Among the highlights are autonomous emergency braking and radar-based forward collision warning systems, blind-spot detection, lane-change assist and lane-departure warning systems, and a high-beam assist system, which automatically dips the headlights when an oncoming vehicle is detected.

INCHING UP

01

Sportage steps from 17s (Si) via 18s (SLi) to 19-inch alloys on the Platinum, while tyre profile drops from 60 to 45. Responses are sharpened rather than the ride, despite the flagship's firmer GT Line suspension.

INSIDE PRIDE

02

Cabin's quietness, design and high-quality finishes make a compelling triple act. New Sportage is bigger inside, especially in the rear area, which benefits from the 30mm-longer wheelbase.

PLATINUM CARD

03

Entry Si gets monochrome TFT-LCD instrument cluster; SLi and Platinum versions are colour. Top version also gets flat-bottom perforated leather sports steering wheel with paddle shifters, and heated/ventilated front seats.

OR TRY THESE...

Hyundai Tucson Elite AWD

$38,240

Pairing of a 130kW/265Nm 1.6-litre turbo-petrol and seven-speed dual-clutch contributes to greater appeal in the mid-spec Tucson than found in its 114kW/192Nm 2.0-litre Sportage counterpart.

Ford Kuga Titanium

$44,990

No point mentioning the CX-5 and Forester; better to point out the curiously slow-selling Blue Oval alternative. Flagship with 178kW 2.0-litre turbo-petrol is the quick (if relatively thirsty), highly equipped driver's SUV.

Hyundai Genesis V8

The bent-eight Korean that got away

FIRST OVERSEAS DRIVE

WHY didn't Hyundai bring the Genesis V8 to Australia? It's a 5.0-litre V8, in a rear-drive prestige sedan. We Aussies have an affinity with such beasts, so surely it was a no-brainer. And yet Hyundai Australia plumped for just the 3.8-litre V6.

Having spent the last five months in an Oz-spec Genesis V6, I can tell you it's not short on herbs. So that clearly wasn't a strong motivating factor. And Hyundai says the V8, which sells mostly in North America, had not been engineered for right-hand drive. To do so, it says, would have added too many millions to the program's cost.

But still, what if the Genesis V8 had been engineered for RHD from the outset? Would it have contributed significantly to the car's appeal? I had to know. So on my way to the Detroit show, I detoured to California to find out.

The V8's extra 84kW and 113Nm is immediately noticeable, even though the car weighs 170kg more than the top-spec V6 sold in Australia. It accelerates more vigorously from standstill and is more generous in its response to throttle inputs.

If, like me, you reckon 170kg seems like a lot of weight for two extra cylinders in an alloy block, you're right. The V8 model also has bigger wheels and brakes, and considerably more equipment. Most obvious from the driver's seat is the iDrive-style controller. There's nothing inherently wrong with my long-term V6's dash-mounted buttons, but interacting with the touchscreen involves reaching, whereas the V8's controller doesn't.

Other equipment is not so obvious, but obviously welcome, like lane-keeping assist (Aussie V6 thrums the wheel when you stray; the US V8 steers as well). And there's a traction-control button, too, in which 'Off' really means off.

There's little difference with in-cabin refinement – the visual and tactile kind, and the on-the-move kind. Materials and finish are top-notch, the driving position spot-on.

The V8 engine is barely audible during normal driving. Press harder and a pleasing V8 burble is evident but still restrained, as befits a prestige sedan. Give it full wellie and there's noticeably more kick, but not as much as you'd expect with 30 percent more capacity, and it doesn't feel like the 1.8sec 0-60mph difference one US mag claims between the V6 and V8 (7.2 v 5.4).

The eight-speed auto lacks the smarts to really leverage the V8's stronger bottom end. The gearchange mapping feels out of step with the engine's charms. It's also not as smooth as my V6.

Dynamically, the Genesis V8 possesses the same innate stability and confidence as the V6. Its larger 19-inch tyres provide plenty of grip, and the extra weight doesn't handicap it much in corners; just a touch more bodyroll. The front-end has decent bite, though is devoid of feel.

The ride, however, is less than stellar. Overly busy and sharp, particularly at low speeds, it's a weakness for a prestige sedan. It's also a pointed reminder that Hyundai Australia's local tuning efforts, which deliver a more absorbent and more controlled ride, are to be applauded.

That's not a deal-breaker, though. If it were to come Down Under, Hyundai Oz would surely fettle the V8's manners. It'd make a pretty decent flagship, too, with that extra performance and equipment. But business cases are about numbers and it's hard to see the V8 adding much to the V6's 50 sales per month. Not enough to recoup the cost of a RHD program.

GLENN BUTLER

PLUS & MINUS

Busy ride; touchy throttle; lifeless steering ; heavy; thirsty

Strong engine; quiet cabin; premium feel; value for money

Model Hyundai Genesis 5.0 Ultimate
Engine 5038cc V8 (90°), dohc, 32v
Max power 313kW @ 6000rpm
Max torque 519Nm @ 5000rpm
Transmission 8-speed automatic
Weight 2060kg
0-100km/h 5.8sec (estimated)
Economy 13.1/100km (US)
Price $US53,850
On sale Not for Australia

The V8 is barely audible during normal driving but press harder and a pleasing burble is evident

Heart and Seoul

The V8 engine is Hyundai's own, codenamed Tau, and is not that old. Its first outing was in the 2009 Equus, Hyundai's rival for the 7 Series, S-Class and Lexus LS, sold mostly in Korea and North America – but it lacks some features of its more modern rivals such as turbocharging and cylinder deactivation.

It's also a relative of the Genesis's 232kW 3.8-litre V6, which is due to be replaced by a 3.3-litre twin-turbo V6 in the next-generation Genesis G90 launching in the US late this year.

Rumour has it there's a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 in development, too, which could call time on the 5.0-litre Tau. For more on that, see *Redline*, page 18.

OR TRY THESE...

BMW 550i
$US66,300

The car Hyundai is gunning for with the Genesis V8 by offering a larger car with more kit for less cash. But the BMW's tauter chassis, leaner kerb weight and punchier twin-turbo V8 make it the driver's choice.

Mercedes-Benz E400
$US63,100

With the twin-turbo V8 E500 no longer offered in the States, it's up to the twin-turbo 3.0-litre V6 E400 to stick it to the top Genesis. But with an all-new E-Class just around the corner, any criticism of the W212 E400 is about to be null and void.

Model Volkswagen Multivan Gen 6 TDI450
Engine 1968cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, TTD
Max power 150kW @ 4000rpm
Max torque 450Nm @ 1400-2400rpm
Transmission 7-speed dual-clutch
Kerb weight 2274kg
0-100km/h 9.9sec (claimed)
Economy 6.5L/100km
Price $74,990
On sale Now

PLUS & MINUS

Dated design; barely noticeable facelift; no Audi inside

Refined, torquey engine; safety; some lower prices; broad range

VW T6 Transporter/ Caravelle/Multivan

Transporting from a time far, far away

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

VW LAUNCHED the 'new' T6 Transporter range just before *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* at Christmas and, by George, the similarities are striking. Like the film, the T6 comes from an at-times innovative, genre-creating, era-defining and also occasionally dull but always high-quality franchise with a fierce fan base.

Striking back against the resurgent Transit, Trafic and Vito rebel forces, the reskinned T6 arrives with fresh nose and tail-lights, lower pricing, improved dash and optional driver-assist tech. There are some 26 variants.

But behind the shiny baubles you'll find a trio of 2010-era 2.0-litre turbo-diesels (103kW TDI340, 132kW TDI400 and 150kW TDI450, with six-speed manual or seven-speed DSG). All shift smoothly, pull promptly and offer up to 0.5L/100km less consumption, aided by idle-stop.

Bolted to 2004 T5 architecture, the steering is tight and handling surprisingly surefooted, but the ride is still hard. While the T5 was a distant galaxy ahead a dozen years ago, nowadays it's rudimentary – especially against the terrifically dynamic Transit – except on the expensive models offering blind-spot monitoring, adaptive cruise control and AEB safety. The 1960s hippy Kombi's descendants are now just like the clones they're attacking.

Why the same-old rehash? VW reckons retaining the T5's dimensions means current owners can swap over existing fit-outs, saving big bucks. A true tale too this is, as Yoda might say.

Prices tumble by $1700 for the $36,990 TDI340 manual front-drive range opener.

Meanwhile, the Multivan TDI340 SWB DSG seven-seater and Caravelle TDI340 LWB DSG nine-seater start from $50K apiece, stretching to $80K for the hotel/airport-run Multivan LWB Executive TDI450 DSG; its torque-monster twin-turbo diesel can just about tow a Death Star. The special limited-edition launch model featured here, called Generation 6, is distinguished by LED front and rear lights, two-tone paint and 18-inch retro-style 'Disc' alloys. It also comes packed with numerous tech, safety and comfort features.

Four airbags, touchscreen with available reversing camera and apps connectivity, better storage and better dash materials for the people-movers complete the T5 sequel… err, new T6 blockbuster. Let the van wars begin!

BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

Diesel-less Caddy

A facelift of the Golf-based Caddy (above) for 2016 is just as invisible, but due to the diesel emissions scandal, it's initially an all-petrol line-up, with a sparkling new 92kW/220Nm 1.4-litre turbo-petrol with optional DSG from $29K. However, the new 62kW 1.2 TSI Runner base model was also due as we went to print. 'Cleaned-up' diesels will arrive in mid-2016. A revised dash with new touchscreen apps and optional driver-assist safety round out the 'new' Caddy.

Haval H2

An unhappy marriage of price and ability

FIRST AUSSIE DRIVE

ON PAPER, the Haval H2 shows the most promise for the newly arrived Chinese brand.

The smallest, cheapest SUV in its range, the H2 sits between the Mazda CX-3 and CX-5 in terms of size. It looks smart, with good attention to detail – apart from the overzealous Haval badging – and that carries over inside, where smart design and pleasant materials flourish. Even the artificial-leather seats smell like hide. The biggest let-down is the centre screen's tacky, dated fonts and washy reversing camera.

There's an odd approach when it comes to features: there's tyre-pressure monitoring, yet no digital speedo; an electronic park-brake, but no ambient temperature read-out; and a single USB won't cut it, even if there are VW-like SD card-readers. Weirdly, sat-nav isn't even available as an option on this flagship 'Lux', let alone the lower-spec 'Premium'.

The driving position seems high even for an SUV, and while you become accustomed to it, you won't get used to the thick A-pillars that hide cyclists and pedestrians, nor the slim rear windscreen, blocked by head-restraints. At least the side mirrors are large.

But there's no respite from the roughness of the 1.5-litre turbo-petrol engine. The 110kW/210Nm four-cylinder rumbles like a power-sander at idle, and the steering wheel shakes when you're stationary. You could easily mistake it for a diesel LCV.

Sadly, the driving experience is also that of a generations-old tradie. Road noise from the 18-inch Kumhos isn't as big an issue as the throttle mapping, which gives the accelerator a mind of its own. It's utterly disobedient: a small amount of throttle and it fails to respond; give it a full kick, and it might – or might not. It's a lucky dip.

There's strong pull when it does react, but the discomfort of that throttle snowballs with brakes that bite at the last moment and steering that takes forever to respond. Confidence behind the wheel diminishes, as does any chance of enjoyment.

Around corners, the well-bolstered front seats save you from the bodyroll, but in the second row you'll slide around excessively. The H2's saving grace is acceptable low-speed ride, though it's still clunky over the smallest bumps, and it never completely settles.

In terms of space, those 60/40-split rear seatbacks fold to extend the boot from 300 litres to 890 – less space than most rivals – but the seat-base is fixed, so there's no chance of attaining a flat floor.

Overall, it's the H2's lack of driveability that is the deal-breaker. Yet what really hurts is the fact Haval is pitching it as 'premium'. The only thing premium about the H2 is its price.

DAMION SMY

Home cooking

This is the thirstiest model in the H2 range, returning an official 9.0L/100km with its six-speed automatic, which is only available with front-wheel drive. A more economical six-speed manual is offered across the range, with economy improving to 8.2L/100km for the 4x2 version. Haval parent company Great Wall's previous engines have been developments of Mitsubishi units, but this engine (codenamed GW4G15B) is an in-house development. It's all-alloy and has variable valve timing, but lacks direct injection and idle-stop.

PLUS & MINUS

Poor dynamics; no sat-nav option; too expensive; dorky badging

Handsome design inside and out; decent overall finish

Model	Haval H2 Lux
Engine	1497cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v, turbo
Max power	110kW @ 5600rpm
Max torque	210Nm @ 2200-4500rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Kerb weight	1520kg
0-100km/h	10.0sec (estimated)
Economy	9.0L/100km
Price	$30,490
On sale	Now

Head to head

A FAST 'N' FURIOUS FACE-OFF

EURO CHIC

KOREAN CHEEK

WORDS JAMES WHITBOURN

HOLDEN ASTRA GTC SPORT	V	KIA CERATO KOUP TURBO TOURING
Holden's next-gen five-door Astra is due late this year, and we're yet to spy a three-door, so for at least a while, if you want a Lion-badged small sporty car, the Astra GTC is it. But there are plenty of alternatives to the $29,990 GTC Sport manual tested here, such as the $30,690 Kia Cerato Koup Turbo Touring manual alongside. **15/20**	**PRICE & EQUIPMENT** 20 POINTS	These cars share standard hill-start assist, front and rear parking sensors, auto headlights, front and rear fogs, heated electric side mirrors and decent infotainment systems with sat-nav and Bluetooth. As top-spec versions they also get smart keys with push-button start, and a chilled glovebox in the Kia. **15/20**
Stepping up from the Astra GTC to the GTC Sport brings welcome upgrades including heated eight-way adjustable front sports seats with cushion extenders and power lumbar adjustment. The split/fold rear seat has Isofix points for a pair of child seats. Seats fold flat to expand the 380-litre boot into a wagon-like load area. **15/20**	**INTERIOR & VERSATILITY** 20 POINTS	Kia cabin is a bit too similar to the Cerato sedan's. Koup boot is similar to Astra's in that it holds 378 litres, but lacks the handy large loading aperture of the hatched Holden. Matches its rival with 60/40 split/fold rear seats and Isofix points, though, and offers at least as much leg room. Rear air-con vents are nice to have. **14/20**
Both cars feature 1.6-litre direct-injected turbo-petrol fours teamed with six-speed manuals (six-speed autos are optional). The Holden produces 280Nm from 1650-5000rpm and 147kW from 4750-6000rpm as a manual (the auto loses 20Nm and 22kW). Officially uses 7.5L/100km of premium unleaded from a 56L tank. **15/20**	**PERFORMANCE & ECONOMY** 20 POINTS	Kia makes slightly more power and a fraction less torque, mustering 150kW at 6000rpm and 265Nm from 1750-4500rpm, using regular 91-octane from a 50L tank at 7.7L/100km. Both respond well from low- to mid-revs and feel equal to their high-seven-second 0-100km/h claims, though neither car sounds terrific. **14/20**
Taut suspension set-ups ensure the Astra and Koup don't ride like a cooking Cruze or Cerato, but the Holden has the edge (as long as the surface doesn't), despite sporty 19-inch alloys on 235/45 hoops. Thank its more advanced suspension design and superior tuning. The Holden is also more adept at shutting out wind and road noise. **14/20**	**RIDE & REFINEMENT** 20 POINTS	Kia's 18-inch wheels with 225/40s and torsion beam rear suspension are not a recipe for comfort. The ride is fidgety on the kind of busted bitumen common in Aussie cities, though quite acceptable on fresh tarmac. The cabin can get noisy on country coarse chip, and lets wind and suspension noise intrude too. **13/20**
'HiPerStrut' front suspension, a similar dual-axis design to that used on former Ford and Renault hot-hatch heroes, sets the Astra apart. It gives some of the benefits of a double A-arm set-up without the cost, and helps the GTC Sport respond quickly and positively. Greater feel from the electric power steering would be nice, though. **15/20**	**STEERING & HANDLING** 20 POINTS	Electric steering with Kia's three-mode FlexSteer system largely amounts to a gimmick, but you can at least set-and-forget your preferred weighting. Basic suspension ensures handling is not quite up to its rival – or even Kia's own IRS-equipped Proceed GT. Lacks finesse, but balance is quite good and it's fun for what it is. **13/20**
74/100	**POINTS SCORE**	**69/100**

VERDICT

These warm coupes make sense based on the amount of power, straight-line performance and fun you get for the money. Speed-versus-spend is at its strongest in the base versions, but the upper variants tested here bring desirable equipment, such as sat-nav in the Kia. The manuals are less costly and more involving than the autos, and more powerful in the Holden's case. We like the styling of the Holden (and its hatchback practicality) while the Kia looks plain inside and the Holden feels dated. They're swift, but don't sound great; fun, but not exactly finessed. We'd pick a Polo GTI over either of them – or a genuine hot-hatch if the budget can stretch to $40K. If we had to choose, though, we'd take the Astra on looks alone.

Want the car of your dreams? **Like it. Lease it.**

Dreaming about a new car? Earn a salary? Pay less income tax, reduce running costs and receive big discounts. It's simple. Use Wheels to choose your next new car. Then find out how much money you can save with a novated lease with us.

leaseplan.com.au/wheels

LeasePlan

It's easier to leaseplan

iPad, iPhone,
Android, Google,
Samsung, Laptops,
Desktop computers,
Windows Phones
& tablets

READ YOUR **FAVOURITE MAGAZINES** ON ANY DEVICE!

More than forty titles available!

Read ANYWHERE, ANYTIME on ANYTHING!

Search for your **favourite magazines** on these Apps and websites.

Download on the App Store | Google play | MAGZTER | zinio | MAGSHOP

Apple, the Apple logo and iPad are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

THE SON ALSO RISES

Mazda design chief **Ikuo Maeda** discusses unfinished Spanish churches, Japanese knives, tackling Eau Rouge in the rain and fights with his RX-7 designer dad

WORDS
MICHAEL STAHL
PHOTOS
THOMAS WIELECKI

JUST five weeks before the 2015 Tokyo Motor Show, Ikuo Maeda was staring down the deadline on what could be the defining design of his career, the Mazda RX-Vision. Although on this day Maeda, who has been Mazda's chief of design since 2009, was literally staring down something even more invigorating.

Through the rain-pelted windscreen of a rasping, fat-tyred Mazda R100 classic racer, Maeda was rocketing downhill towards a streaming-wet Eau Rouge corner at Spa-Francorchamps. 'Speedy', as he's been known to his colleagues for many years, was co-driving one of a pair of R100 coupes owned by his friend, Jin Kato.

"Spa! Eau Rouge! It's so fantastic, but so scary," Maeda recounts to *Wheels* in the Mazda Design studio in Hiroshima a few days after the Tokyo show. The notorious Spa weather had cleared for the Masters '70s Celebration 14-lap feature on that September Sunday, but Maeda's red-and-white number 31 car had retired at half-distance.

Maeda, 56, has been racing for more than 20 years, usually in MX-5s of different stripes. He's owned a race-spec Lotus Elise, among many track-worthy cars. "I get to race maybe three or four times each year, sometimes off-shore races under FIA, like at Spa," he shrugs.

The R100s were reliving their European motorsport debut in 1969, when a pair of works cars finished fifth and sixth outright in the Spa 24 Hour.

For Maeda, it wasn't just about having fun. The first Japanese-born Mazda design boss in a decade can be as inspired by motor racing as by traditional Japanese handcrafts. The design he's pursuing can exist in the often-overlooked moments before an idea, or in the translation of a sketch to a hard form by the hands of an artisan.

"In racing, there is a mood, a tension," Maeda says. "On the starting grid, there is a tension and sometimes I can get some images by driving. It's not a direct connection to the form. It's more like a feel."

This 'feel' should come naturally to him because car design is in Maeda's blood. His father, Matasaburo, worked at Mazda for 30 years from 1962 and famously designed SA22C, the first RX-7 of 1978.

mazda

Mazda
Design
HARD MODELING Gr

SPEED 速度
MAEDA
11.2.2015

The Mazda design boss is as inspired by motor racing as by traditional Japanese handcrafts

Upmarket aspirations?

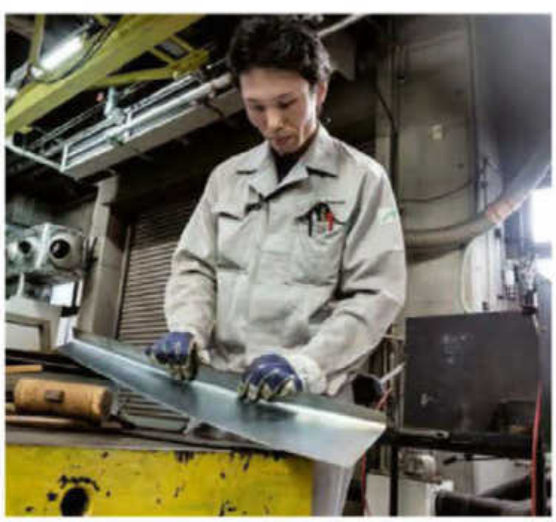
IT'S hard to imagine in Australia, where the Mazda 3 has regularly propelled the brand to top-three status, but in its home country Mazda remains a minnow. Mazda ranks a lowly sixth in domestic sales – with less than half the sales of fifth-placed Daihatsu.

Mazda's not too concerned. It has little presence in Japan's kei car [660cc] market and exports 65 percent of everything it produces in Japan. Top brass have gone on record as saying they're happy with the company's size.

However, it's possible they have big ambitions for the brand's positioning. With Chinese brands chasing volume in western markets and Koreans launching premium sub-brands, Mazda might well be taking stock of its history and its identity.

During *Wheels*' exclusive visit to Mazda Design in Hiroshima, we spotted a large storyboard in the advanced design section, pinned with pictures of European performance luxury cars – Aston-Martin, Bentley GT, Porsche 911, Audi S8 – and worded definitions of luxury as applied to each. It probably wasn't there to set the mood for the next Mazda 3…

By taking itself upmarket, Mazda could stay relatively small – and profitable.



The young Ikuo, however, was fascinated with bicycles, then motorcycles. “I was most interested in Honda’s 50cc motorcycle, the Monkey. Not the design, just the riding. A friend of mine had one; he let me ride it a couple of times at my school. Actually, I was stopped by the Police and… forget about this!”

Maeda is slightly built and quietly spoken. His hair is fashionably coiffed, flecked with grey, and he wears a moustache and small beatnik goatee. He’s corporate, but edgy. The perfect Japanese automotive design boss, 2015-style.

His appreciation for design arrived suddenly, at college age. “My father had a paper knife [the Danese Ameland, by Enzo Mari]. Stainless steel, very simple, but very beautiful. And when I tried to use it, as a tool, it was so easy to use. I understood: this is what design is doing.”

He was already studying in a course that led to industrial design at the Technical and Textile University in Kyoto, 350km from his family home in Hiroshima. The course involved transportation design: “Boring stuff, like traffic systems, buses and trams in Kyoto…”

Maeda’s first car was an RX-7, bought second-hand. According to family folklore, he’d been unaware that his father had designed it.

“It was a very low price! But that car was so much fun, the feeling of the motor, so smooth, the car was so light – the sound is quite different from other cars … I made practice every night in the mountains, on the twisty roads. I almost forgot that I was supposed to study. Actually, I crashed it – destroyed it completely – when I was young.”

The Speedy nickname came a little later, when colleagues learned that Maeda had twice had his licence suspended.

By the time he graduated, Maeda knew he wanted to design cars. Joining his father’s company, which he did in 1982, turned out to be anything but a fast-track. “The company was very strict. I was not allowed into the design studio – I had to apply to other divisions. When my father retired [in 1992], I could come into design.”

He worked in Product Planning for the first five years, then went to Mazda’s California design studio from 1987-91. Tom Matano – designer of the original MX-5 – was a mentor, and Maeda was “every day, every night, always sketching the dream cars”. In between, he designed “a lot of wheels.”

A spell at Ford Design in 1999 provided a good grounding in the commercial realities of the business. Then came the product that put the second-generation Maeda on the map: the RX-Evolv concept of 1999, which duly became the production RX-8 in 2002.

If it was a big deal to everyone else that the son had followed the father, it wasn’t so much to Ikuo. One can detect a hint of the competitiveness that sometimes exists between successful generations.

“To tell you the truth, we do not have many chances to talk about the car with my dad,” Maeda says. “Once we start to talk about cars, we fight – all the time! His taste in cars and my taste are totally opposite … He likes the car like German cars – static, very cool, silent,

“Once we start to talk about cars, my dad and I fight – **all the time!**”

Future design

THE uniquely small rotary engine has given Ikuo Maeda plenty of practice in packaging alternative powerplants. But witness the RX-Vision, with the long-bonneted proportions of a front-engined supercar.

Maeda predicted that whatever the future brings in terms of powertrains and aerodynamics, he wants to design cars that will look like cars.

“Aerodynamics, for instance, is so important for us. This is a huge challenge to create the body form … It is kind of easy to get a great number in aerodynamics. But aero changed the car’s shape to a different way. That is not our logic, not our ideal.

“Small powertrains give a lot of freedom in terms of form and proportion for the designer, which is good. But it’s not necessary to use every freedom and to make it different.”

Ikuo Maeda's main attractions

1999 RX-Evolv concept

2003 RX-8 *(below left)*

2007 Mazda 2

2010 Mazda Shinari concept *(below centre)*

2012 CX-5, Mazda 6

2014 Mazda 3, Mazda 2

2015 CX-3 *(below right)*, MX-5, CX-9

very functional – like Bauhaus. He's that type of guy. And I like more emotional, dynamic, bold."

Does he have any heroes in automotive design? "I've never tried to pick a specific name, but if you asked me to do it I'd pick [Lamborghini Miura and Countach designer, Marcello] Gandini. I really respect him, because he has his own originality in terms of the style, but also he has so many ideas."

Maeda could be a Japanese version of an Italian designer. He is inspired by art and, in particular, architecture. "I prefer to see three-dimensional things instead of two-dimensional. I'm not so many times in a museum to see drawings. I prefer to see a new building."

Thinking of the surfacing that's a signature of Kodo, the Maeda-spawned design language that now covers Mazda's passenger model range, I suggest American architect Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, might be a Maeda favourite.

Maeda has visited Bilbao, certainly, but the building he names without hesitation is across the country in Barcelona: Antoni Gaudi's rambling, fantastical Sagrada Familia basilica. How could any modern designer countenance anything that has been under construction for 133 years – and counting?

"I think that's my dream!" Maeda laughs. "I dream to build a car taking more than 100 years. And I hand my soul, my identity, whatever, over to my successor, and then he starts to rebuild my ideas – the idea evolving, that's fantastic. Each time I visit that building, it's actually growing up. Very slowly, but like living things."

Putting life and soul into things is key to Kodo; conveying the creative thought of the designer and the thumb-marks of the sculptor through the car's form and surface. To do that, Maeda encourages his team to do a lot more with their creativity than sketch cars and follow orders.

Mazda's worldwide design department comprises about 280 people: 230 in Hiroshima and about 20 each in the company's California and Leverkusen (Germany) studios. In addition to the 80 or 90 designers are the expected CAD operators, colour and trim specialists and fabricators – the artisans who create prototype components in clay, metal, timber, resin, metal and leather.

"Normally, a designer started by drawing cars at the beginning, but we stopped that," Maeda grins. "We focused on artworks, freeing the imaginations, creating some forms, and then translating that into car design. This is unique, compared to the others.

"We have to complete the design as quickly as possible, this is normal. But before starting some specific program, we have the freedom to spend more time to play with art works, things like this … Not to eventually copy and paste onto a vehicle's design, but it's like … getting into a zone, yes."

Maeda knows well that what he strives for will just as often be revealed or contributed by artisans during the fabricating process. Deep within the form, shining through the curves, lies our innate familiarity with materials that have been shaped by human hands.

The Hard Model studio at Mazda's Hiroshima headquarters is spotlessly clean, but surprisingly antiquated. Green-painted lathes, drill presses, sanding machines and band-saws dot the large workshop areas.

I had hoped for telepathic 3D-printing, but instead here is an oversized, OCD equivalent of my high school metalwork shop.

There are 3D printing facilities onsite. Maeda says this is convenient for designers to quickly check three-dimensional forms, but adds that making accurate 3D models can consume as much time in data preparation as having someone fabricate it.

And this is lovely to watch. They bend sheet steel with their bare hands and careworn timber mallets. They shape blocks of resin with files and fine sandpaper. They heat and bend timber, and sew leather with quaint Seiko sewing machines.

Hard Model studio manager Tomonori Asano explains: "We artisans were given more of a designer mentality. We don't just create something we are told to create, we inject our own ideas into whatever we are doing."

I see a small, twisted strip of bamboo, highly polished and in the approximate shape of a propeller. It makes me think of a taketombo, a traditional Chinese and Japanese dragonfly toy. But just as quickly I picture an interior door handle. The material, and the culture, giving shape to the car.

"We want nobody to think this is made by computer," Maeda says. "This was made by hand."

The Kodo philosophy is evolving into its next phase, as embodied in the RX-Vision. "I want to try to put Japanese tradition or aesthetics as much as possible onto the body," Maeda says. "This is still Kodo, but this is the difference between this generation and the next one."

How does he define the Japanese aesthetic? "It's very hard to explain, but one thing I can tell you is, make it as simple as possible, but still having flavour; a dynamic feel without any added weight or elements. Make it pure, make it silent, but still having a soul, or an energy."

As a hardcore car guy, Maeda laments the cultural change in attitude towards cars.

"The Japanese trend is that younger people aren't buying cars so much now. That is because of city living, but also, most of the car design is very cheap, very cartoonish. Nobody is having that emotional feeling when they see these cars.

"That has been all the car designers' fault. We have to regret the past, and we have to recap. It has been our fault.

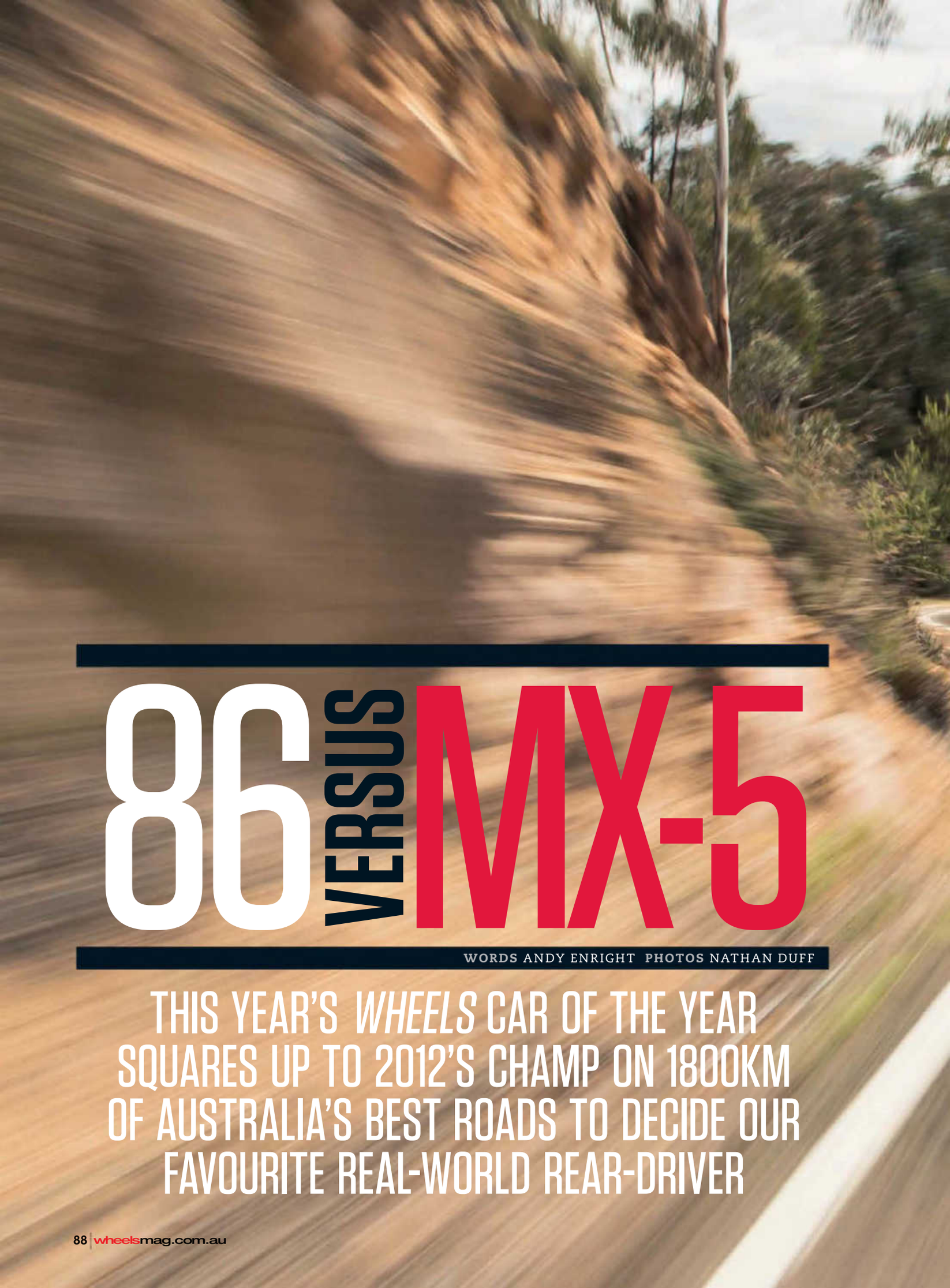
"Do younger people know the deep meaning of the form of the car itself? Most want to go with fashionable and trendy stuff, from Apple or Google or whatever. That's okay. But the other 20 percent we have to educate, to show the true meaning of the car."

Walking on eggshells

WHEELS accompanied Maeda-san to the studio of his friend, traditional lacquerware (Urushi) artist Kinjo Ikkokusai. Mazda had commissioned a work from Ikkokusai to examine how the artist imbued his lacquered boxes with life and soul.

Ikkokusai's work took 10 months. The blue oval-shaped box, which houses two drawers within, was inspired by a famous, semi-circular waterfall outside Tokyo. It comprises 7680 pieces of crushed eggshell laid out in 64 lines. The top is gently domed, perfectly suggesting the surface tension of water spilling over the sides. Five different shades of blue lacquer, each in three coats, is exhaustively polished by hand to create the illusion of sheeting water.

Maeda and his design staff were blown away. "I never asked him to create this kind of thing. After 10 months he brought this to us, and when I unveiled the box my body was shaking … The instant I saw this, I was able to hear the waterfall. Our categories are so different – we work in cars – but I could feel that what we were both doing was aligned."



86 VERSUS MX-5

WORDS ANDY ENRIGHT PHOTOS NATHAN DUFF

THIS YEAR'S *WHEELS* CAR OF THE YEAR SQUARES UP TO 2012'S CHAMP ON 1800KM OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST ROADS TO DECIDE OUR FAVOURITE REAL-WORLD REAR-DRIVER

AFT·133

HINDSIGHT is a wonderful thing. When we drove the Mazda MX-5 away from *Wheels* Car of the Year, we had no idea it was going to carry off the big gong. The votes were yet to be tallied and a stack of formidable rivals made the little Mazda look as if it had brought a knife to a thermonuclear stand-off.

Not envying the COTY judging panel's task of figuring out how the MX-5 squared up against a Volvo XC90, we decided on a more instant barometer of its worth. The Mazda would need to do a number on our 2012 COTY champion, the Toyota 86.

The intervening years have done little to dull the Toyota's appeal and, despite the obvious differences in form, the two cars have much in common. Rear-wheel drive, a peppy 2.0-litre engine and an affordable price tag are a set of criteria that don't seem particularly difficult to replicate, yet it has taken Mazda nearly four years to deliver a product that can compete on equal terms with the 86, a car that rendered the old MX-5 dead in the water. A less ambitious asking price, a more focused driving experience and an identical 109kW per tonne power-to-weight ratio now put the fourth-generation MX-5 directly in the 86's gunsights.

Paring back unnecessary complication is a formula that clearly works for us, and in order to gauge which of these Japanese lightweights emerges victorious, we cleared the diary for three days and pointed them at the twistiest roads on the map. Convertible or coupe, red or white? This could be like picking your favourite child. Gulp.

DAY ONE 474km Melbourne > Haunted Hills > Omeo

THE rhythm and flow is almost hypnotic. Night is falling as we hurtle headlong into the Victorian Alps. Ahead of me are twin pinpricks of red, the MX-5's rear lights dancing and jinking through a tunnel of arching stringybarks. The Toyota 86 seems connected by some sort of elastic umbilical to the Mazda up front, contracting on the way into corners and stretching on exits. A soft constellation of bug splats peppers the screen as the two cars arrow through the night towards supper, schooners and sleep in Omeo. The high country seems abandoned as 100km fall beneath the wheels without seeing an oncoming vehicle.

Fellow journo Jez Spinks crests a rise and sends the MX-5 downhill, the car flowing from apex to apex like a drop of falling water, taking the line of least resistance. I'm working harder in the Toyota, but the earlier track session at Haunted Hills already indicated the Mazda might have the 86 in its pocket on roads like these.

We had expected the Toyota to put down a marker on the racetrack, but despite being 29kW down on power and 5Nm on torque, the MX-5 makes its 200Nm at 4600rpm whereas you need to wring the Toyota's boxer four out to 6400rpm to plug into peak twist action. On a circuit as steep and tight as Haunted Hills, this counts. Time is lost with extra gearchanges in the Toyota while the Mazda lugs its way out of trouble and, despite initially feeling softer in roll and less precise in its steering, there's little doubt that around the track it's round one to the MX-5.

Neither of these cars is about clocking lap times, but we do it anyway, the Mazda generally shading the Toyota by around half a second over the 1.4km circuit.

The MX-5's stability control is much better than the 86's, despite having to be either on or off. The Toyota's electronics grumble and intrude, even in compromise VSC Sport setting, which gets upset when the car runs over kerbs or threatens to fall into mild understeer. Nix all the software and the 86 is easier to steer from the rear. It's a consummate entertainer and it's hard to see this particular party trick losing its appeal.

Play the hooligan in the MX-5 and you soon draw the conclusion that the rear end is even looser than the 86's, but the steering doesn't offer the same precision and linearity of response. Bodyroll, pitch and squat aren't anything like as well contained. Drive the car as you would an 86 and the rear end feels livelier yet harder to rein back accurately.

Yet it's exactly this body movement that makes piloting the MX-5 at speed so involving. Work its weight transfer to your advantage and you can progressively load up the front on the way into corners, feeling the sideways forces build to the point where the 205/45R17 Bridgestones benignly relinquish their purchase. It's here perhaps more than anywhere that the Mazda is superior; the 86's Michelin Primacy HP rubber isn't anything like as tenacious or malleable in its response.

But the circuit can only tell us so much. Time to head for the hills.

Inconspicuous consumption

Part of the joy of running cars like these is the lack of guilt in driving them hard. Brakes and tyres had no issues whatsoever after a morning of hard labour at Haunted Hills, and the MX-5 had only sipped through a quarter of a tank.

Being given a good workout cross-country and through some serpentine hill routes, the Toyota's 9.5L/100km was by no means a disgrace, but the MX-5 is the go if you have a servo aversion. It recorded a scarcely believable 7.8L/100km.

The road down to Mount Beauty comprises 237 bends, and the gloves are off from turn one

At the wonderfully named Mt Blowhard we wait for Earth to rotate for optimum lighting

AFT 133

It becomes clear that Mazda genuinely has done more with less. It's a defining moment

Welcome to the cheap seats

Mazda's gram-strategy of trimming weight even extends to the seats, with regular steel springs ditched in favour of string netting. As comfortable as they are at a standstill, the seats lack lateral support at speed. Bracing your leg against the hard plastic corners of the dash resulted in every member of the road test team emerging sore and bruised. No such issues in the big-boned 86.

DAY TWO 586km Omeo > Mount Hotham > Omeo > Falls Creek > Corryong

CHASING the sun is the first order of the day, so it's a pitch-black start with just moths for company and last night's mattress-sized parma threatening to put a deep-fried dent in the MX-5's performance.

An hour or so at the wheel allows me to watch the Toyota's rear lights scribe arcs up the hill from Omeo to Hotham. Hooking a tyre deep into cambers catapults the Mazda through the tighter bends. Try that in the 86 and it skips and understeers as its dampers rapidly run out of answers. The damping has been improved for the 2015 model year, but the 86 still can't compete with the Mazda's composure with its smoothly ramped limited-slip diff.

Hotham Alpine Resort comes and goes in the half light. There's not much that's sadder-looking than a ski resort at the start of summer, the odd scruffy-looking snow patch clinging to the south-facing slopes. Photographer Duff works his magic at the wonderfully named Mount Blowhard as we kick our heels waiting for Earth to rotate to the requisite angle for optimum lighting. While fiddling with the MX-5's infotainment system, I discover that it advises the Australian drink-driving limit is 0.5 percent, 10 times the actual limit…

After considerable time on the mountain top, a coffee-related mutiny sees us back in Omeo. Breakfast dispensed with and Spinks having almost charmed his way out the door without making payment, we don't really have a destination to aim at. That old staple of car journalism, the map on the bonnet shot, doesn't really work with smartphones, but we locate a route that looks like binned spaghetti and set off.

The Bogong High Plains Road up from the Big River starts off tight and technical, with hit-and-miss surfaces that'll make you regret ordering those extra pancakes. It then climbs through vast stands of gnarled snow gums, the road punching through a forest of skeletal white fingers before you burst out, blinking in the sun, sightlines stretching for kilometres as the road lazily drapes across the high country. Clouds roll in from the west while we take a break and, by the time we get to Falls Creek, a dry electrical storm grumbles and grinds over the sawtoothed summits.

The road from Falls down to Mount Beauty comprises 237 bends and drops 1234 metres in the course of 30 kilometres, and the gloves are off from turn one.

The MX-5 feels like it's made for this. It has the damping to cope with the lumps and bumps and weighs a gnat's bum over a tonne, so despite being given an unholy leathering, the middle pedal doesn't even hint at going soft. The steering comes good too, feeling better when manhandling the front end through hairpins than it does trying to finesse a longer radius. The headlights of the 86 gradually recede in my mirrors as it becomes clear that Mazda genuinely has done more with less. It's a defining moment, the passing of a torch.

At the base of the hill, calls are made and accommodation is booked in Corryong, near the New South Wales border. The road to Corryong sees radio banter pass between the cars, the lead car okaying overtakes for the following vehicle. One truckie clearly disapproves of these unconventional overtaking manoeuvres and attempts to give chase. For a few kilometres it's like Steven Spielberg's *Duel* but instead of a finale of fiery destruction it merely ends with him flipping us the bird as we rectify a navigational blunder somewhere outside Tangambalanga.

The sun has long since set as we roll into Corryong. The Courthouse Hotel wins a recommendation for its food quality, friendliness of staff and interesting decor. Black mark for the hole someone's charmingly punched through the bathroom door, giving access to a swarm of mosquitoes that leaves my arse looking like Nigella Lawson's white chocolate and raspberry cheesecake.

Watch it at wheelstv
WheelsMag.com.au/MX5v86

DAY THREE 770km Corryong > Cabramurra > Tumut > Melbourne

"THAT was a police car, right?" crackles Spinks over the radio. An unmarked green HSV had just eyeballed us as we make progress out of Corryong. A couple of nervous glances in the mirror suggest he's probably got a date with a doughnut and isn't interested in booking us for a handful of kays over.

We've decided to hotfoot it up to Cabramurra, the highest town in Australia, as a nominal turnaround point. Breakfast at Khancoban, brief introduction to the all-encompassing influence of Snowy Hydro in the area, and then it's time to start up the road to Cabramurra, a company town built in 1954 for workers on the Tumut hydro-electric station and local dams.

The road up is steep and technical, with unguarded drops, abrupt surface changes and damp sections. Again, the Mazda's torque tells, the Toyota having to be persistently harried between the second-gear rev limiter and third, always just dropping out of the power band on anything with a bit of gradient. On flatter terrain, there's no doubt the 86 would have given a better account of itself. While many enthusiasts cite a manual gearbox as key to involvement, as sacrilegious as it sounds the Toyota's transmission is not an enabling factor in this instance. Repeatedly banging between two gears on roads like these doesn't add to the enjoyment; it's simply a chore.

The Mazda demonstrates there is a better way, its superior flexibility excusing the fact it only revs to 6800rpm. You won't care. Not once did I hit the rev limiter in the MX-5 – there's no need. On the downside, the Mazda's engine doesn't sound particularly enticing, lacking the gargling baritone of the Toyota's flat-four. There's a bit of intake burble but otherwise the SkyActiv-G 2.0-litre's vanilla latte soundtrack would benefit from an extra shot of exhaust.

Cabramurra has, like many company towns, a slightly spooky uniformity, a Stepford settlement, if you like. The identically clad locals are friendly and happy to chat with trippers keen to tick off the 1488m-high town on their Aussie bucket lists. Jeannie from Alabama has rented a motorbike and ridden here from Melbourne. "It's beautiful here. I couldn't wait to get out of Melbourne. Rudest locals I've ever met." Probably ordered an "expresso".

From the roof of Oz, it's downhill all the way, pointing the nose of the Toyota north to Tumut and then south-east on the long haul back to Melbourne, the tripmeter tipping over 1800km on the West Gate bridge.

IT HAS been an epic trip on some brilliant roads and both cars have proven their mettle, but time and again the MX-5 has done enough to eke out an advantage. There's a greater subtlety to its character, time spent with it revealing layers to its personality that reward the keen driver.

The Toyota 86 leaves slightly bruised but far from bowed. It may be a little narrower in its bandwidth than the slick Mazda, but it runs the MX-5 mighty close, testament to the fact that doing the simple things right is a formula that doesn't age. If you've ever driven a modern sports car with a myriad of settings for engine, transmission and suspension, and just wanted one mode that works, you'll like the 86. Its solitary mode is guaranteed to entertain.

The Mazda MX-5 is a triumph, though. That said, it's a bit of a slow burner. Take a 20-minute test drive and the bodyroll, the inconsistent-feeling steering and the cramped cabin could deter some buyers, but it's worth persevering with. Mazda has found a way of getting things to gel when the MX-5 is driven to its extremes. The harder you go, the better it gets, and that is the mark of a genuinely talented sports car. On the narrow, twisting roads we drove, there aren't many cars I'd swap it for.

Rejoining the Melbourne sprawl and crawl is a reminder that driving purely for the fun of it, solely for the pleasure of skilfully operating a piece of machinery, has become a deeply unfashionable pastime.

Set a few hours aside, decide on no particular destination, switch off your phone and just go pedalling. Granted, I'm preaching to the converted here, but if you've quietly fallen out of love with driving or merely become shackled by the insidious creep of *utility*, either of these two cars can rekindle the flame.

If I had to choose one, I'd make it the Mazda, a standout Car of the Year that does enough to score a narrow points victory over a previous favourite. If only I could fit in the damned thing.

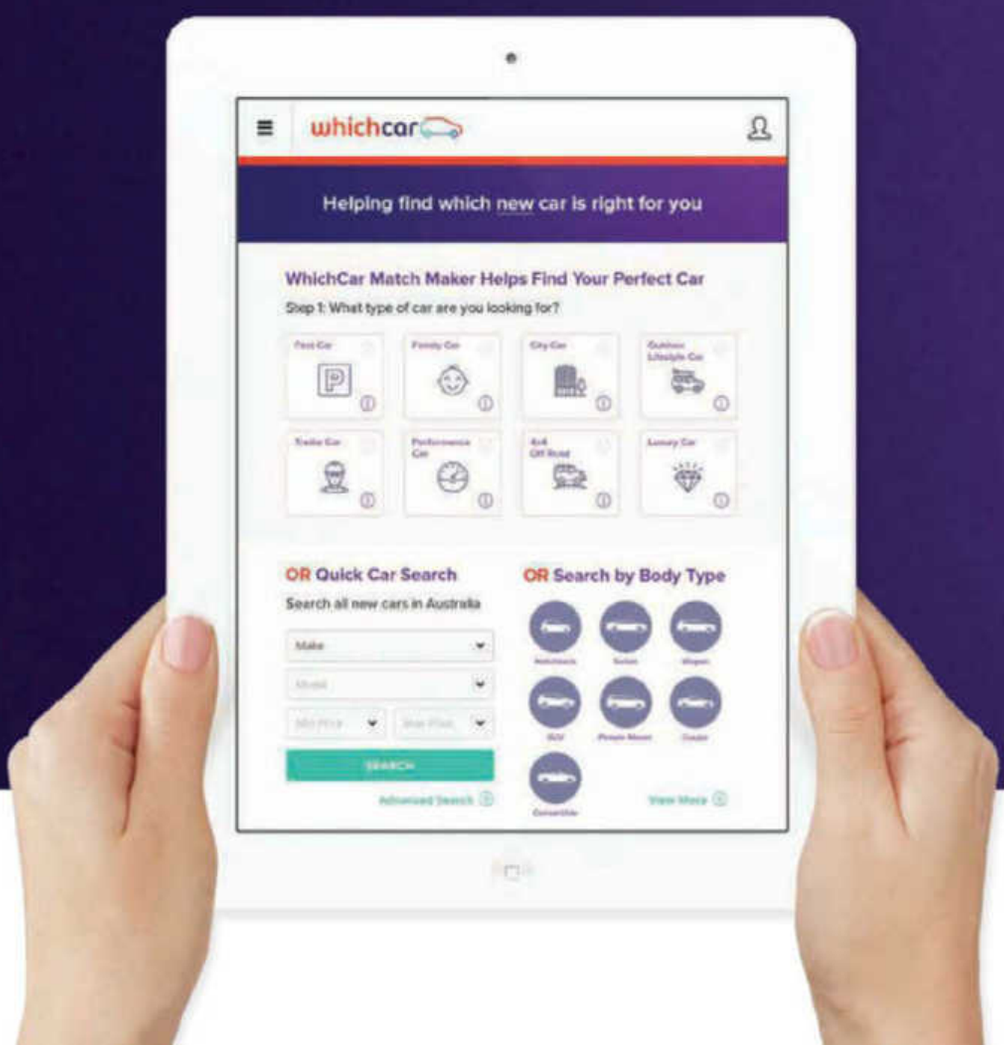
Model Toyota 86 GTS
Engine 1998cc flat 4, dohc, 16v
Max power 147kW @ 7000rpm
Max torque 205Nm @ 6400-6600rpm
Transmission 6-speed manual
Weight 1275kg
0-100km/h 7.6sec (claimed)
Fuel economy 9.5L/100km (test average)
Price $35,990
On sale Now

Model Mazda MX-5 2.0 Roadster
Engine 1998cc 4cyl, dohc, 16v
Max power 118kW @ 6000rpm
Max torque 200Nm @ 4600rpm
Transmission 6-speed manual
Weight 1033kg
0-100km/h 7.3sec (claimed)
Economy 7.8L/100km (test average)
Price $34,490
On sale Now

Get new car advice from the experts – not your nephew.

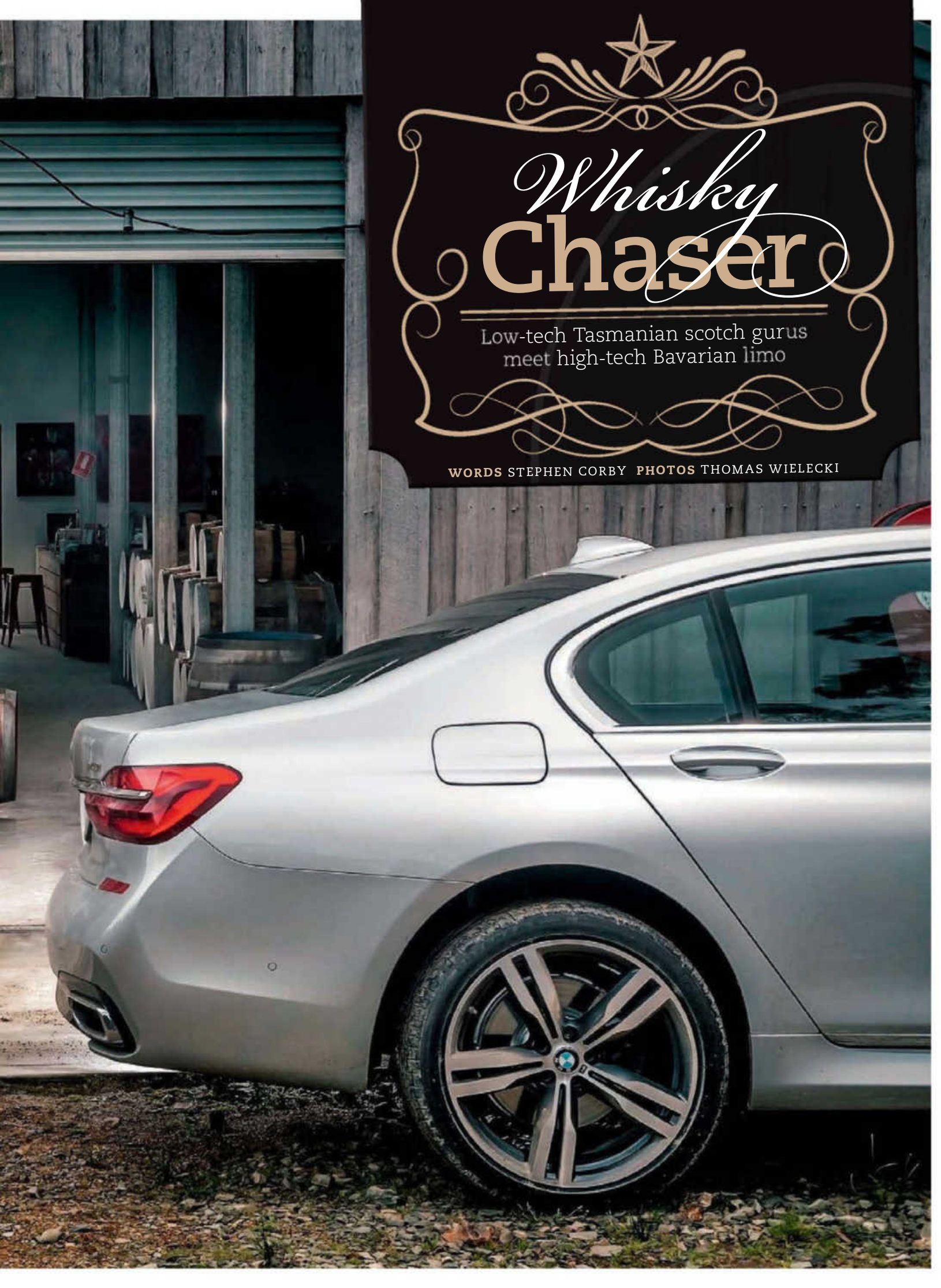
WhichCar puts the fun back into finding your new car. Enjoy friendly, independent advice from the experts at Australia's ultimate new car comparison site.

whichcar.com.au



whichcar

FLAMMABLE
LIQUID
3



Whisky Chaser

Low-tech Tasmanian scotch gurus meet high-tech Bavarian limo

WORDS STEPHEN CORBY **PHOTOS** THOMAS WIELECKI

LEFT: ROOF AND PILLARS MADE OF CARBONFIBRE

RIGHT: INTERACTIVE KEY FOB WITH SMARTPHONE-STYLE TOUCHSCREEN

OPPOSITE: SAMSUNG TABLET OPERATES CAR FUNCTIONS FROM UP TO 300 METRES AWAY

The idea of piloting “the most technologically advanced car on the road” made my inner nerd twinge

I CAN see what you're thinking: "What's wrong with our lead picture? Road testing and alcohol don't mix! And why is that brooding male model doing an advertisement for whisky in the proud pages of *Wheels*?"

Fear not, gentle reader, for there is little danger of me transgressing the drink-driving laws while on a mission to find out how the fuzzy little island of Tasmania has tipped the globe on its axis to become the home of the world's finest scotch (which is exactly the kind of refined drink that buyers of the new 7 Series love to imbibe, possibly while relaxing in the back seat, using their car's new integrated Samsung tablet to play with the flavour notes of the cabin).

Why? Because, to me, whisky is medicine; bad medicine, because it's what my parents used to give me for a toothache. Sure, it worked, but as a result it's a drink I associate with numb gums, flambéed nostrils and wooziness.

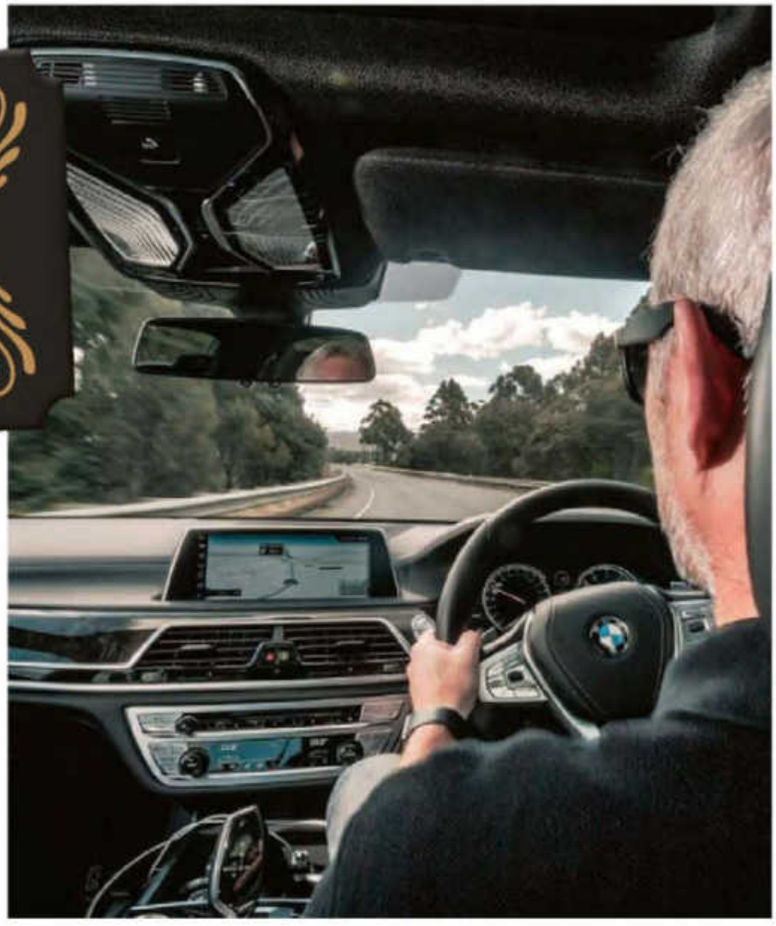
I decided not to mention this to the deeply passionate distillers we met in Taswegia, nor to The Editor when I was asked to do the story, because the idea of piloting "the most technologically advanced car on the road" made my inner nerd twinge like that moment when you open the bright white box around a new Apple.

There's plenty to geek out over in our new 740i, from its i8-sourced carbonfibre core – which saves up to 130kg while torsionally rigidifying – to what is officially now the most desirable key fob in car world, with its smartphone-style touchscreen and the ability to remotely check your range or oil levels, or to "pre-condition" the car so your buns will be instantly warmed when escaping the Tassie chill.

We couldn't even leave the car park of the Hobart BMW dealer until I'd played with the new Gesture Control system, which allows you to turn up the stereo volume by twiddling your finger in the air, or to pinch and spin a freakishly clever 3D image of the car from all angles. You can even answer or reject phone calls with a dismissive flick of the wrist. Pointless and gimmicky? Yes. But great fun? Also assuredly yes.

On the freeway to our first distillery – Overeem Whisky, which forms part of the increasingly well-sozzled Tasmanian Whisky Trail – I couldn't resist freaking out snapper Wielecki with the semi-autonomous steering, which allows you to sit and watch, for 10 seconds at least, while the big beast steers itself around bends. Sadly, it follows line markings the way a three-year-old follows instructions; with the best of intentions but an undeniable lack of precision.

That's the kind of thing that would drive to distraction a perfectionist like Rob Polmear, Overeem's deeply diligent distiller. At the tender age of 27, he has a passion for whisky that makes his face glow like he's been 'tasting' as soon as he starts to talk about fores, hearts and faints in his "spirit run".



ROB POLMEAR TRIES TO CONVINCE CORBY THAT WHAT HE'S ABOUT TO TASTE IS NOT RACING FUEL

SULLIVANS COVE STUNNED THE WHISKY WORLD IN 2014 AND IS FINALLY CRANKING UP PRODUCTION AFTER 25 YEARS. "IT'S A GET RICH VERY, VERY SLOW SCHEME," LAUGHS BERT CASON (BELOW)

Ask Polmear what 'peat' is and he'll launch into a description of Australia's only peat farm – basically a marshy bog – that makes it sound like the Garden of Eden. Some whisky makers burn peat to kill and dry the barley because they believe the smoke imbues it with extra flavour.

Polmear soon has me holding a glass of pure, clear-looking spirit – the "new make", which is 63.4 percent alcohol and smells like racing ethanol mixed with tequila and diesel – and encourages me to taste it. Wielecki is keen to capture what this does to my facial muscles and I'm about to bravely sip some when Rob decides it might not be the best plan; he advises to just dip my finger in and rub some on my lips and tongue instead. Sounds medicinal to me.

Incredibly, or perhaps inevitably, it tastes better than it smells, and I discover this is what will become whisky, once it has soaked the colour and flavour out of some carefully chosen, second-hand barrels that previously held other forms of liquor.

What I've also noticed is that the "distillery" is actually a garage so small we'd have struggled to park the 7 Series in it (unless we used the remote self-parking system, which is still illegal in Australia, but apparently wonderful in other countries). This is the first inkling I get that Tasmania's whisky production, while renowned, might be even smaller than a cottage industry; more of a one-man-tent industry.

Passionately, Polmear says they're not in it to make money; they're in it to make good whisky. "We only make 70 litres of whisky a day; the scale is tiny," he says. "Somewhere like Glenfiddich in Scotland spills more in a day than we produce per year. But there are advantages to being small; we've got that whole hand-crafted thing, because we can control everything, we do it by hand while they use computers."

Despite its small size, and the fact it's only been open seven years and it arguably takes a decade to make just one truly great whisky, Overeem is hugely well rated on the world market, scoring 95 out of 100 for one of its tipples in something called Jim Murray's Whisky Bible, where 94 or higher is considered to be elite.

I'm expecting something slightly larger and more impressive from our next stop at Sullivans Cove because this is the distillery – named after the harbour where the Sydney to Hobart race finishes each year – that shocked the world by winning World's Best Single Malt Whisky in 2014.

While it's bigger than a garage and has a rustic sales room at the front, the business end is a large shed, about one-tenth the size of your local Bunnings, and all the bottling and labelling is still done by hand.

Sullivans' spokesman Bert Cason explains that the world titles are conducted as blind tastings and that, when the judges were told which whisky they'd picked, all the Scots in the room reacted as if they'd been told they couldn't deep-fry Mars Bars any more.

"The whisky that won, the way we make them, it was from just one barrel, so there were only 500 bottles of it, and they went from being worth $180 each the day before to thousands of dollars the next," he explains. "Sadly, we never got to sell a bottle after it won the award. They were all gone, except for three bottles, which were so valuable we kept them in the safe. But then a while ago the three owners just said 'bugger it', and they drank them all."

Once again, it seems these whisky makers, despite their success, won't be rushing out to buy a new 7 Series any time soon (prices start at $217,300 for the 730d, rising to $312,700 for the 750Li). Sullivans Cove has been in business since 1991, but only turned its first profit a couple of years ago, Bert tells us, shrugging apologetically.

"It's a get rich very, very slow scheme," he chuckles.

Port Arthur
Historic Site

Would you like an ‘E’ with that?

YOU may have seen that some whisky seems to be spelled incorrectly, and assumed, as I did, it was just American stupidity, but apparently it’s an Irish thing.

As Bert Cason from Sullivans Cove explained, the ‘whiskey’ spelling was invented back in the bad old days of prohibition in the US: “Scotch was always whisky without an ‘e’, then during prohibition the Scots were selling pretty crap whisky to the Americans, because they were desperate, and the Irish started selling theirs with an ‘e’ to distinguish their higher-quality ‘whiskey’. Then the Canadians caught on to it, and the Americans, so basically those countries all do it with an ‘e’, and everyone else does it without one.”

Irish whiskey is still different today, because it’s triple-distilled while we, and the Japanese, follow Scottish tradition and only distill twice.

The Irish also make single-malt whiskeys, which are considered “the champagnes of whisky”, according to the experts.

It’s genuinely fun to drive; good news for those who choose to sit up front

"There's no rushing this and no one does it for easy money; you need patience. Because we won't bottle anything until it's 10 years old, we can only currently produce 18,000 bottles of whisky a year, and Australia could drink that five times over on its own, let alone the global demand.

"People have heard of us, they snap up anything we put online straight away, and people imagine that we're a hell of a lot bigger than we actually are. In 10 years we'll be sorted, because we're running seven days a week and making 150,000 bottles a year now, but we're only selling 18,000, because we're working on old supply. We'll get there."

Cason, a car enthusiast, advises us to climb Mount Wellington, a towering edifice that looms over Hobart even more impressively than the constant scudding cloud cover, to capture the sunset.

Switching between the two Comfort modes and the Sport mode as we tackle the twisty climb, the 7 Series is startlingly impressive and wonderfully involving to drive for what is essentially a limousine for rich executives. Our 740i starts at $224,200 but is optioned up to $237,100, which includes a small, muscular Thai woman inside each seat for massage purposes, a steal at just $2000 the pair.

What's most impressive, in any kind of driving, is the ride quality, which when cruising feels not so distantly related to a Rolls-Royce – BMW claims the 7 shares the same plush carpets as its brother brand, though makes no claims on its "waftiness" – but more like a 5 Series when you're pushing on.

Part of the magic is thanks to optional ($5500, but standard on the 750i) Executive Drive Pro, a form of active suspension that uses cameras to scan the road ahead for potholes and pre-adjusts the suspension to prepare for the impact in milliseconds. The road up Mt Wellington has almost as many bumps and lumps as it does small-animal carcasses, but the 7 Series simply oozes over all of them with supreme disdain.

Perhaps even more impressive is the steering, which feels grand and yet muscular, like The Rock if he'd been born into royalty. It's genuinely fun to drive, which is good news for the 85 percent of Australian buyers who choose to sit up front.

Why you'd buy such a big car and not enjoy the rear-seat luxury is beyond me, but so is the idea of being rich enough to pay thousands of dollars for bottles of Tasmanian whisky.

Driving back down in the dark, the 7 Series shows off one more trick, its Adaptive Headlights, which measure speed, steering angle and yaw and adjust the lights to give you better vision around bends. They're impressive, but I'd like to have seen the 7's new laser lights, which are standard on the 750i and apparently double effective distance from 300m to 600m.

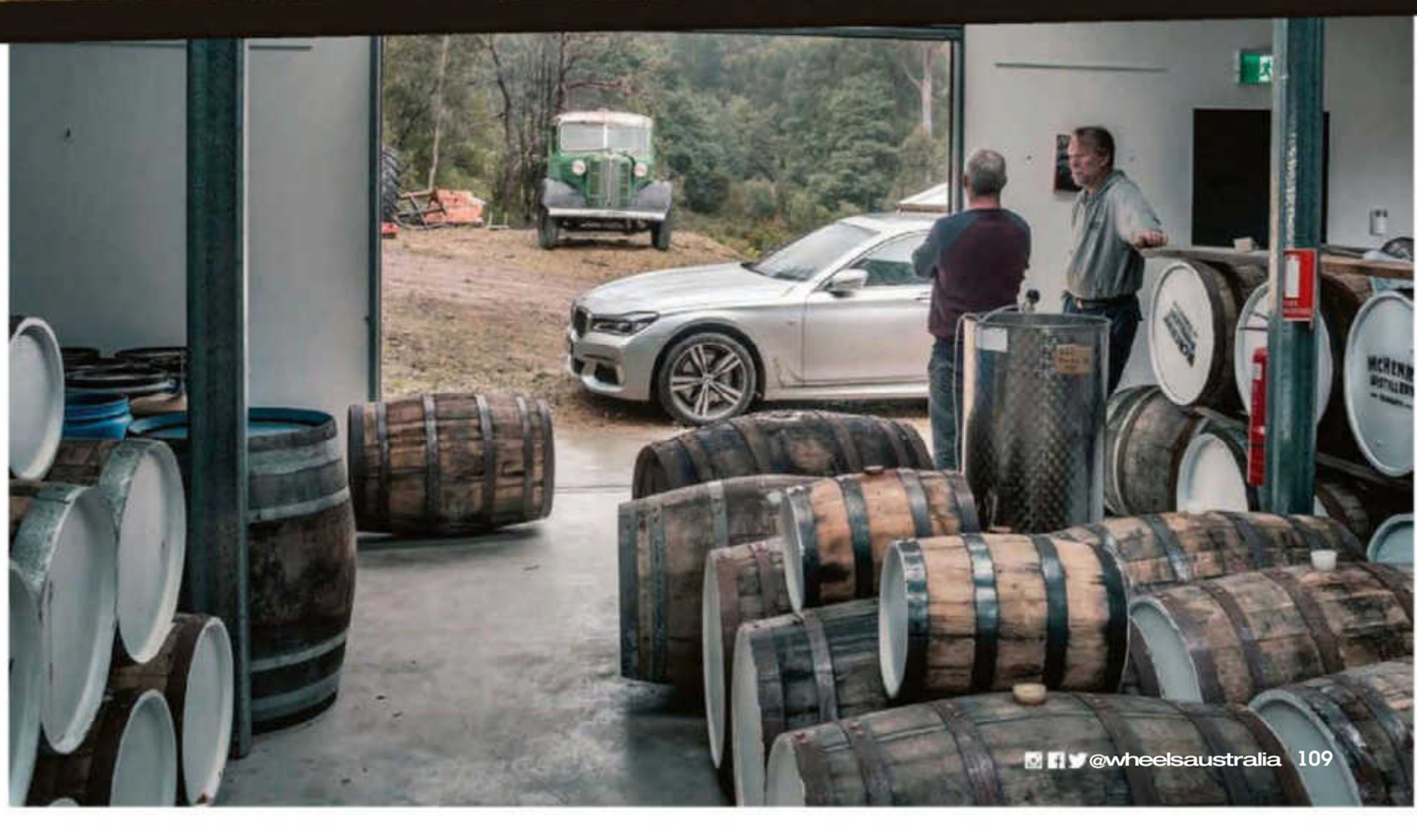
The next day we choose a longer jaunt to the historic penal colony of Port Arthur, to visit Australia's southern-most distillery, William McHenry and Sons.

Nestled in an implausibly green valley and fed by a natural spring, which provides beautifully soft and mineral-rich water for its whisky, McHenry's is still small but features beautiful timber buildings that

LEFT: THERE ARE ASPECTS OF DISTILLING THAT STILL REEK OF MAD PROFESSORS

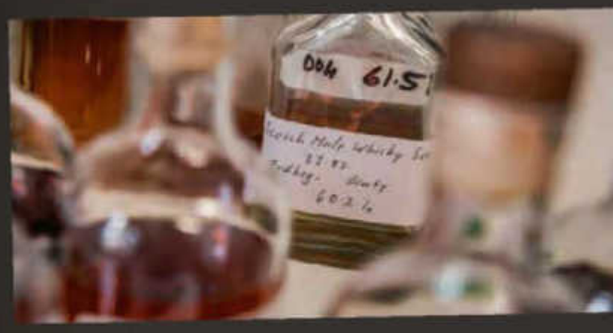
RIGHT: "STILL SMELLS LIKE MEDICINE TO ME"

BELOW: BILL RAVENSCROFT TRIES TO CONVINCE CORBY HE SHOULD SWAP THE BMW FOR HIS OLD TRUCK



MAIN IMAGE: CORBY AND THE NEW 7 SERIES TAKE ONE LAST LOOK OVER BEAUTIFUL HOBART BEFORE HEADING HOME

BELOW: VISITORS TO McHENRY'S CAN MAKE THEIR OWN GIN AND TAKE IT HOME WITH THEM



wouldn't be out of place in a movie about running moonshine, and is expanding into gin production, because you can knock out a batch in a day or two, rather than waiting 10 years. Visitors can even create their own gins and take them home on the day.

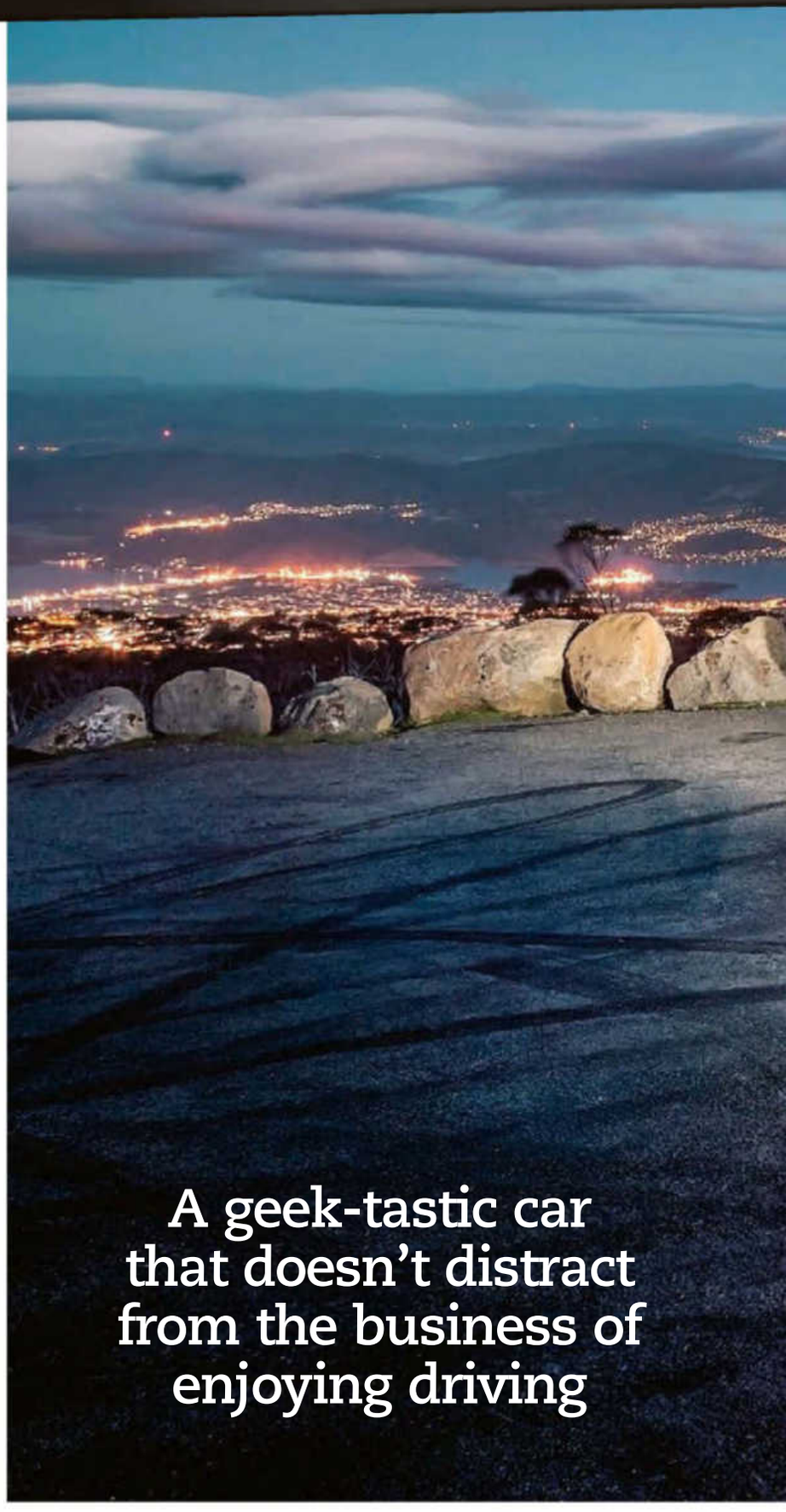
Distiller Bill Ravenscroft, who looks and sounds like the sort of bloke who'd have a crack at moonshine given the chance, says Tasmania's biggest advantage – and the reason it has more whisky producers than any other Australian state – is its almost Scottish weather.

"Look at the climate," he says, waving an arm at the grey skies and piercingly cold rain outside. "It's just perfect for this, because whisky barrels, which give you all your flavour, are porous; you can evaporate liquid out of them, so you want a climate like this to reduce evaporation, or what they call 'the Angel's Share'. If you were in Alice Springs, in 10 years a barrel would be empty, but down here you lose very little. And the Tasmanian barley, the water, all the ingredients are fantastic, of course."

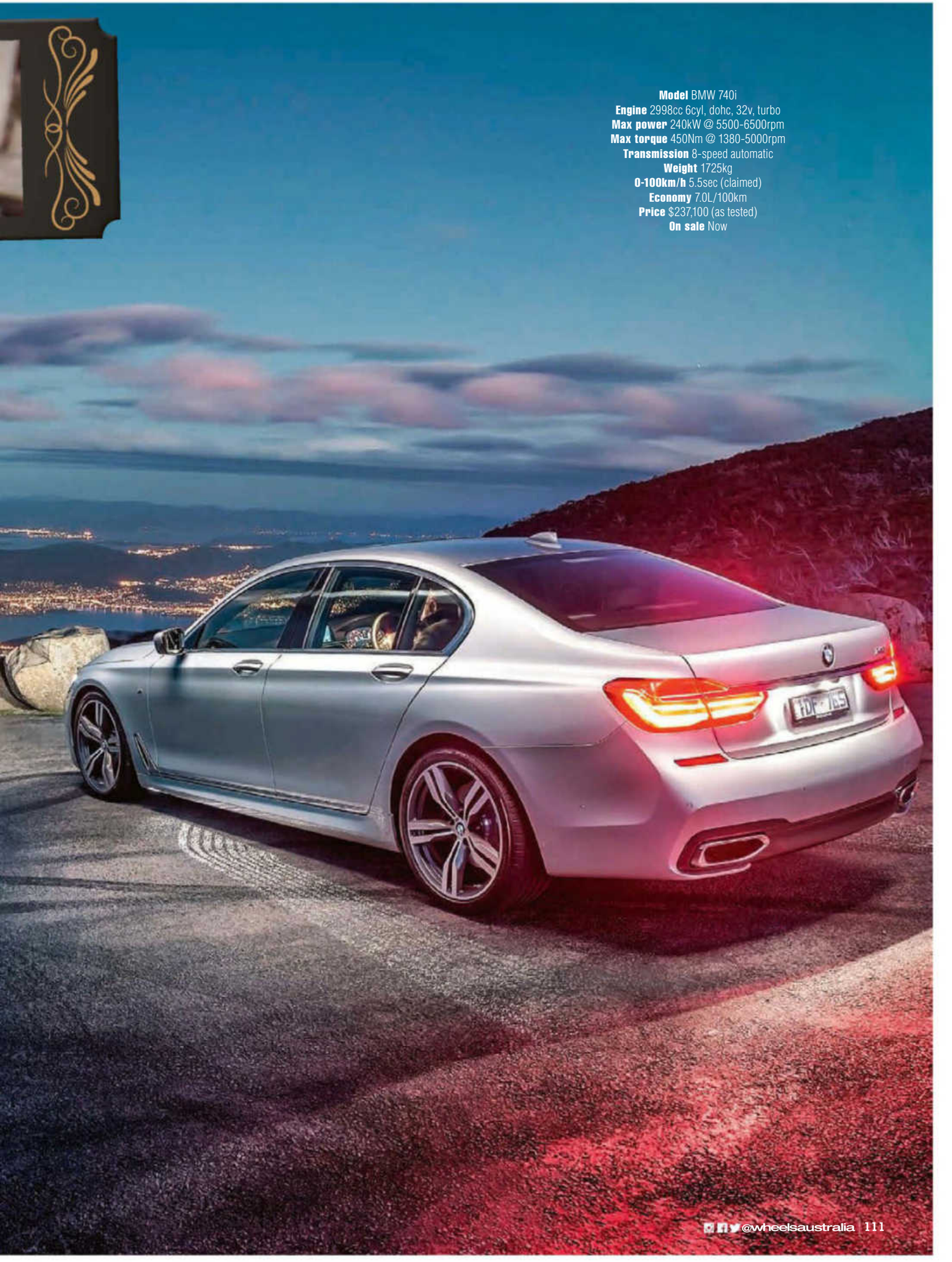
After a couple of days of tasting the tiniest amounts of whisky possible, and having Rob Polmear almost convince me that a scotch with the right amount of oiliness on the palate can be palatable, even pleasant, I'm almost sorry I have to drive home. Then again, Polmear also tried to tell me he can taste things like cotton candy, marshmallow, citrus, pencil shavings and custard in whisky, so he might just be insane.

But we're in Tasmania, home of not just the world's best scotch but some of its best roads, with a geek-tastic car that somehow doesn't let all its gigabyte bells and wifi whistles distract you from the business of enjoying driving.

I didn't end up taking a single drop of Tassie whisky with me, because childhood scars don't heal that easily, but I did bring home a hard-drive full of good memories of driving the Whisky Trail in a car that's not just from a different country, but a different time.



A geek-tastic car that doesn't distract from the business of enjoying driving



Model BMW 740i
Engine 2998cc 6cyl, dohc, 32v, turbo
Max power 240kW @ 5500-6500rpm
Max torque 450Nm @ 1380-5000rpm
Transmission 8-speed automatic
Weight 1725kg
0-100km/h 5.5sec (claimed)
Economy 7.0L/100km
Price $237,100 (as tested)
On sale Now

Fleet street

Style and substance combine in these four fabulously dressed

Audi	A1 Sportback
Mini	Cooper
Peugeot	208 GT-Line
Renault	Clio GT

fashions

and amusingly nimble $30K premium superminis

WORDS
BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS
PHOTOS
ELLEN DEWER

REMEMBER the time before the modern Mini burst onto the scene 15 years ago, when the notion of a premium baby hatch seemed as absurd as a $30K Yaris would today? In pre-Millennium Australia, petite always meant cheap.

But BMW's resurrected British brand has subsequently converted urbanites and confounded Doubting Thomases, building an almost evangelical following globally. Like people willing to pay $50 for a Gold Class movie ticket, it's all about the experience.

Some have tried to emulate the Mini's winning formula with hits (Fiat 500), what-evs (Citroen DS3) and misses (Alfa Mito), but only arch-enemy Audi's VW Polo-based A1 has truly menaced the Mini. Together, they control some 80 percent of the booming $25K-plus Light class in Australia, which – driven by lots of fresh metal – was up 20 percent last year.

Happily, all that rivalry has forced Munich to firstly slash prices (today's third-gen Mini, released in 2014, starts from $24,950 compared to $32,650 for a base Cooper in 2001 – which is $46,500 in today's money). And, secondly, to present the first Mini-based five-door since BMC's Morris Nomad of 1969 to take on that pesky A1. Naturally enough, Ingolstadt responded last winter with a minor makeover headlined by broadly similar 'repositioning'.

However, it was a pair of promising French upstarts that prompted this shootout. In our nine-car supermini Megatest (*Wheels*, March 2015), Peugeot's under-rated 208 managed a respectable fourth thanks to excellent packaging, a classy cabin, sassy styling, sparkling dynamics and a comfy ride – which had us thinking that the upcoming Series II version (subsequently released last October) might be improved enough to joust with the Germans.

As the newest model here, the GT-Line (from $27,490) is the sportiest non-GTi hot-hatch expression of the revamped 208 range, which sports a near invisible facelift (basically the front bumper has changed), substantially lower entry pricing (now from $15,990) and a new 81kW/205Nm 1.2-litre turbo triple, mated solely to a Toyota-supplied six-speed torque-converter auto, in place of the previous 88kW/160Nm 1.6-litre atmo four and old-school four-speed.

Though boasting sat-nav, self-parking, touchscreen connectivity, climate control, and auto lights and wipers, you pay extra for niceties such as metallic paint (pricey at $990) and reversing camera ($300 – or $500 with Autonomous Emergency Braking). That said, the GT-Line looks appealingly GTi-like, brandishing cool 17-inch alloys, front cornering lamps, LED daytime-running lights, bolstered sports seats and racy pinstripe/gloss trim inserts.

Our second contender from France (via Turkey), the

Where's Fiesta Sport?

FORD'S dashing Fiesta Sport 1.0-litre Ecoboost is a properly sorted driver's car that could have been a contender for this comparo, especially considering how accomplished its powertrain and chassis are. But even at a bargain $22,525 for the dual-clutch version, the Fiesta would be well out of its depth with such a dated exterior design (nearing eight years old), laughably outmoded cabin presentation (which lacks any semblance of charm these days) and its lack of active driver-assist tech such as AEB. The next-gen Fiesta – due late this year – can't come soon enough.

OUR TEST POOCH DECLARED THE AUDI'S BACK SEAT TO BE MARGINAL, THE MINI'S DOOR OPENING TOO NARROW, THE PUG ROOMY AND THE CLIO A BIT CONFINED

Renault Clio GT costs $28,990 in as-tested Premium guise (just $500 short of a base Renaultsport 200) and comes with a fixed glass roof, heated front seats, camera, spoilers and an endlessly entertaining 'R-Sound Effect' app that mimics a bunch of Renaults, Alpines and even a Nissan GT-R.

On the other hand, you'll save $3500 by going with the non-Premium GT and still score the semi-fat Renaultsport-tuned chassis (slightly firmer springs and dampers), RS Drive Sport mode (larger throttle openings, faster gearchanges, heavier steering, a tuned diff), paddle shifters, unique bumpers, huggy seats, rear sensors, keyless entry/start, sat-nav, climate control, LED DRLs, 17-inch alloys and the group's only five-year warranty. But no AEB. Nor, controversially, rear-seat curtain airbags, though Renault reckons beefing up the surrounding panels makes them redundant…

Whatever, the Clio's here because of stellar recent form: a $20K Expression with the same 88kW/190Nm 1.2 turbo and six-speed dual-clutch (the only gearbox available in four-cylinder models) managed a bronze in that supermini Megatest, while a 0.9-litre three-pot turbo manual topped Fiesta Sport and Alfa Mito TwinAir (*Wheels* July 2014). The Clio IV range was also a podium finisher in 2013's COTY. Will its luck hold?

France versus Germany, then. Not for the first time.

None of these rivals can match the sheer power and flexibility of the 100kW Cooper

Representing the Fatherland, though built in England (is this what the automotive world would be like if the war went the other way?), the F55-series Cooper five-door from $27,750, or $30,100 with a six-speed torque-converter auto, riding on a 72mm-longer wheelbase for extra rear-seat space over the three-door Mini. For $1700 more than the entry-level five-door, the Cooper gets a friskier 100kW/220Nm 1.5-litre triple (instead of a 75kW/180Nm 1.2) and gains a leather wheel, cruise control with brake function, rear sensors, auto lights and wipers, and 15-inch alloys.

However, our test car arrived with options totalling $15K, including Pepper Pack (essentially climate control, fog lights, front armrest and uprated audio for $3K), fancy 'cross punch' leather ($2500), 17-inch alloys and a double sunroof ($2K apiece), AEB ($1350), a head-up display ($850), front radar ($700), metallic paint ($800) and Harman Kardon sound ($1200). Little wonder ours felt like a baby British Bimmer inside.

Audi's A1 Sportback Series II comes from Belgium, wearing a wider grille, bigger bumpers, revised headlights and wavy tail-light lenses. More importantly, an oh-so-sweet 70kW/160Nm 1.0-litre three-cylinder turbo debuts at entry level, priced from $26,900 with a five-speed manual or $28,250 with an S-tronic seven-speed dual-clutch.

Equipment levels aren't lavish – cruise, auto lights and wipers, paddle shifters, manual air-con, rear radar, Bluetooth and 15-inch alloys – though ours runs out to $32,730 with the $2K Style (xenon headlights, LED DRLs, 17-inch wheels) and $2500 Technik packs (sat-nav and better audio). Underlining the fact the A1 is this group's veteran, it has no auto-brake safety tech.

Turning to the road, we start with the Pug, the freshest of the Frenchies. Despite the extra performance, extra gears and 55kg lighter nose that downsizing delivers, the Pug's Pure Tech heart

Audi A1 Sportback

Released in 2010, the A1's aeroplane wing-inspired dash and separate screen presentation inspired a generation of copycat designs, so it still seems contemporary. It's a delight to use too, if a tad austere in base form. But the rear bench is marginal for space and barren to behold; the feeling of an entry-level Polo is completely at odds with Audi brand values. Boot volume is this group's smallest, ranging from 270 to 920 litres. Below the floor lurks a space-saver spare.

Mini Cooper

Narrow rear doors and low roof restrict entry. Circular themes abound but at least the third-gen modern-era Mini scores a less twee layout than before, having the solid look and feel of a scaled-down BMW. Optional luxo-leather seats boost comfort markedly, but there's no denying the latest Cooper's newfound quality and upmarket ambience outshine even the Audi. Boot capacity is 278 to 941 litres, aided by having only a tyre-inflation kit rather than a spare wheel.

Spirit of the GTI

Australians were deemed not sophisticated enough to appreciate the Mk1 Golf GTI of 1976, but the essence of the 81kW original – before VW embarked on an escalating power, price and size war that now sees the Mk7 kick off from $40,990 – can be found in this widely accessible quartet, from their spirited performance and chuckable handling to their Mk1 Golf dimensions. You can drive each flat-out and have fun without needing to reach supersonic speeds.

The Pug sports a near invisible facelift but looks appealingly GTi-like

transplant isn't the anticipated silver bullet here, though real-world acceleration and responses – particularly in an urban environment – are now much livelier. Yet there isn't the sizzle of the 80kg-heavier 308 equivalent with its stronger 96kW/230Nm punch. So the GT-Line feels a bit flat, like something is holding it back. For instance, there's a momentary hesitation when moving away from standstill, like old-school turbo lag. It's only beyond that where the Pure Tech pulls away energetically, aided by a quick-witted shifter. We were expecting more fizz, frankly.

That the 208 is generally the most economical – all contestants here are equipped with fast-acting idle-stop systems for effective emissions relief – reflects the Peugeot's drivetrain efficiency.

Around town, the dual-clutch Clio's long-moaned-about lag remains a point of frustration. Forget about point-and-shoot take-offs; it seems to take an eternity for turbo and transmission to spool up before there's any consensus for momentum, with a bit of initial drivetrain grumble thrown in.

Once moving, however, Renault's 1.2 turbo four provides robust yet refined performance, particularly in the 80-120km/h bracket where it leaves the smaller-capacity triples trailing. Also, even forgoing the gimmicky RS sound effects, there's a satisfying sensation of speed – certainly more so than the mere 0.1sec gap to 100km/h between it and the 208 suggests.

At face value, the Clio's fuel consumption might appear alarming, but that's because we chose to engage the RS Drive's addictive Sport mode, taking full advantage of the wider throttle openings and faster gearshifts. Egged on by a sexy baritone exhaust, it was simply driven harder for longer than the others. Just to be fair, though, one tankful in snooze mode returned the best result of the test – 6.5L/100km. But could you restrain yourself?

Audi's terrific 1.0 TFSI was the slowest in all categories against the clock, but in everyday driving its energetic power delivery, combined with seven cleverly spaced ratios, makes for a spry point-to-point runabout, squirting well above its meagre engine capacity. This thing begs to be thrashed, and rewards doing so. Indeed, the A1 feels as fiery as the fastest here (the Cooper). Only when loaded, or climbing hills, does the lack of cubic inches hurt. That it returned near-best economy numbers while being driven flat-out highlights the brilliant engineering behind this perky little powertrain.

No rival can match the sheer power and flexibility of the 100kW Cooper, however. Thrummy yet cultured, it is the only car here with no discernible lag off the line, the best for prompt throttle responses, the least affected by cargo or inclines, and fast enough to eclipse 160km/h before we ran out of track during performance testing. Lower-spec Mini engines have long lacked balls, but this charmer belts along while remaining impressively frugal. The 1.5 Cooper's $1700 premium over the 1.2 One is money well spent.

It's therefore mildly frustrating that BMW's engineers have dialled back much of the Mini's one-time steering sharpness. Some of the low-speed bite has given way to a consistent, measured and predictable helm that you might expect in a Golf, making a mockery of the brand's 'go-kart' claims. Yes, the handling is flat,

planted and controlled, and the five-door's dynamics gel nicely at higher velocities, but where's the intimate feedback gone? Mr J Cooper would be puzzled. At 57, Mini appears to be having a mid-life crisis.

Exacerbating our grievance is the suspension's inability to properly soak up bumps with the optional 17-inch wheels. Only on the slickest surfaces is the ride quality acceptable. Words like "unsettled", "bumpy" and even "terse" abound, undermining the Cooper's newfound maturity elsewhere. Best you shell out $700 for adaptive dampers, which make a big difference.

Almost the opposite is true for the 208. At low speeds, its steering is really reactive – maybe too much for the uninitiated – with crisp turn-in backed up by heaps of feedback. It's how Mini ought to be. But where the British-branded runabout seems magnetised to the road when belted through tight corners, the Pug's back end lightens up playfully for controllable rear-steer fun, underwritten by a relaxingly supple (if at times noisy) ride. Nice one, Peugeot.

However, when you're really on it, there's too much suspension travel and body movement, and not enough control, to match the GT-Line's athletic visage. Driven like a 208 GTi (which only costs another couple of grand), you're likely to feel queasy after a while.

In contrast, the A1 rarely puts a foot wrong, combining quick and communicative steering, capable and predictable handling, reliable roadholding and pleasing chassis absorbency. In many ways it's just like a scaled-down Golf. And when you step on it more, it all coalesces into a safe, controllable and ultimately vice-free dynamic performer. However, there isn't the same level of interaction or liveliness as in the rest, while rougher roads reveal some suspension clunkiness, along with insufficient wheel travel. As with most VW Group products, you come away with colossal admiration rather than any emotional connection.

The converse applies to the Renault. In most situations it is the most exciting, involving, composed, controlled and connected hatch here. In RS Drive Sport mode, car and driver mesh, resulting in real steering capability, though it's a little heavy at parking speeds. But there's a naturally calm and measured rhythm to the handling that is unique in this company. No rival puts a smile on your face stringing together a set of corners like the Clio can.

That the Clio's ride is also the best overall reflects Renaultsport's remarkable tuning prowess. Even if it isn't as cushy as the comparatively spongy 208's, nothing is as pliant over bumps and potholes as the Clio GT, despite it being essentially a warm hatch.

Fascinatingly, while alone in this group in persisting with rear drums, the Clio finished mid-field for braking.

Similarly disparate levels of character differentiation also exist inside each of the assembled quartet, though all can accommodate five occupants, with the ability to carry two adults in the back seat in reasonable room and comfort.

Shockingly, least impressive inside is the A1 Sportback, despite its elegant, solid and quality dashboard, which still looks contemporary six years on, supported by an excellent driving position and fine ergonomics. But the Audi is a car of two halves; the tight rear quarters' spartan and monochrome presentation is only just acceptable in a Polo Trendline costing half as much, and the lack of map pockets reflects unfortunate penny-pinching.

The Clio is also not great in the back. The sports front seats block forward vision, the backrest's headrests are all but useless, and the rear cushion errs

Peugeot 208

Peugeot's renaissance began with the 208 in 2012, bringing a beautiful and distinctive dash treatment, courting controversy with its low-wheel/high-instrument layout. Overall packaging is the best here, especially in the back, despite a lack of overhead grab handles and a rear courtesy light. The boot is a bonus, with a winning capacity of 311-1152 litres – quite a feat considering there's a full-size spare beneath the floor.

Renault Clio

Clio appears large for a B-segment hatch and feels broad from its superb front seats, but its rear is more constricted than the smaller 208. Dash is a strange mix of sassy instruments, slick touchscreen and cheap, hard plastics, though functionality is good. But there's no rear-seat courtesy light or rear curtain airbags. Luggage capacity is 300-1146 litres, trailing the Peugeot despite having only a 15-inch temporary spare.

TOP TO BOTTOM: 208 GT-LINE NAILS THE GTI-LITE LOOK; *WHEELS* CREW CONSIDERS MINI'S OPTIONS TALLY; CLIO CUTS A FINE FIGURE

AUDI A1 SPORTBACK

$28,250/As tested $32,730**

Drivetrain

Engine	in-line 3, dohc, 12v, turbo
Layout	front engine (east-west), front drive
Capacity	999cc
Power	70kW @ 5000-5500rpm
Torque	160Nm @ 1500-3500rpm
Transmission	7-speed dual-clutch

Chassis

Body	steel, 5 doors, 5 seats
L/W/H/W–B	3973/1746/1422/2469mm
Front/rear track	1477/1471mm
Weight	1175kg
Boot capacity	270 litres
Fuel/capacity	95 octane/45 litres
Fuel consumption	8.2L/100km (test average)
Suspension	**Front:** struts, A-arms, anti-roll bar **Rear:** torsion beam, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Steering	electric rack-and-pinion
Turning Circle	10.6m (2.5 turns lock-to-lock)
Front brakes	ventilated discs (256mm)
Rear brakes	solid discs (230mm)
Tyres	Bridgestone Potenza
Tyre size	215/40R17 87W

Safety

NCAP rating	★★★★★ (AUS)

Performance

Power to weight: 60kW per tonne
Redline/cut-out: 6200/6100rpm
Speed at indicated 100km/h: 99

Speed in gears

1. 42km/h @ 6100rpm
2. 69km/h @ 6100rpm
3. 102km/h @ 6100rpm
4. 139km/h @ 6100rpm
5. 183km/h @ 6100rpm
6. 186km/h @ 5025rpm*
7. 164km/h @ 3700rpm

Standing-start acceleration

0-20km/h: 1.6sec
0-40km/h: 3.1sec
0-60km/h: 5.2sec
0-80km/h: 7.9sec
0-100km/h: 11.6sec
0-120km/h: 16.8sec
0-140km/h: 24.6sec
0-160km/h: –
0-400m: 18.2sec @ 131.0km/h

Rolling acceleration: Drive

80-120km/h: 8.3sec

Braking distance

100km/h-0: 35.9m

Verdict

7.0/10

✓ Enduring design; appealing dash; sporty dynamics; quality; engine

✗ **Drab rear seat; expensive options; tight cabin; high entry price**

Track: Heathcote dragstrip, dry. Temp: 17°C. Driver: Byron Mathioudakis. * Manufacturer's claim. Warranty: 3yr/unlimited km. Service interval: 15,000km/12 months. Redbook 3-year resale: 58%. AAMI Insurance: $909
** Includes Style Package (xenon headlights with LED DRLs and 17-inch alloys – $1990) and Technik Package (MMI Navigation Plus and Audi Sound System – $2490)

MINI COOPER 5DR

$30,100/As tested $45,600**

Drivetrain

Engine	in-line 3, dohc, 12v, turbo
Layout	front engine (east-west), front drive
Capacity	1499cc
Power	100kW @ 4500-6000rpm
Torque	220Nm @ 1250rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic

Chassis

Body	steel, 5 doors, 5 seats
L/W/H/W–B	3982/1727/1425/2567mm
Front/rear track	1501/1501mm
Weight	1175kg
Boot capacity	278 litres
Fuel/capacity	95 octane/40 litres
Fuel consumption	8.7L/100km (test average)
Suspension	**Front:** struts, A-arms, anti-roll bar **Rear:** multi-links, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Steering	electric rack-and-pinion
Turning Circle	11.0m (2.4 turns lock-to-lock)
Front brakes	ventilated discs (282mm)
Rear brakes	solid discs (259mm)
Tyres	Michelin Primacy
Tyre size	205/45R17 88W

Safety

NCAP rating	★★★★ (EU, 3dr)

Performance

Power to weight: 85kW per tonne
Redline/cut-out: 6500/6500rpm
Speed at indicated 100km/h: 98

Speed in gears

1. 46km/h @ 6500rpm
2. 82km/h @ 6500rpm
3. 132km/h @ 6500rpm
4. 180km/h @ 6500rpm
5. 207km/h @ 5580rpm*
6. 188km/h @ 4000rpm

Standing-start acceleration

0-20km/h: 1.1sec
0-40km/h: 2.4sec
0-60km/h: 4.0sec
0-80km/h: 6.1sec
0-100km/h: 9.1sec
0-120km/h: 12.6sec
0-140km/h: 17.3sec
0-160km/h: 24.0sec
0-400m: 16.5sec @ 137.2km/h

Rolling acceleration: Drive

80-120km/h: 6.1sec

Braking distance

100km/h-0: 37.8m

Verdict

7.5/10

Stirring performance; efficiency; grip; classy cabin; mini-BMW feel

Firm ride; lack of 'kart' handling sharpness; divisive design

Track: Heathcote dragstrip, dry. Temp: 17°C. Driver: Byron Mathioudakis. * Manufacturer's claim. Warranty: 3yr/unlimited km. Service interval: 30,000km/24 months. Redbook 3-year resale: 61%. AAMI Insurance: $921
** Includes metallic paint ($800), Leather 'Cross Punch' upholstery ($2500), Park Distance Control ($700), Pepper Package ($3000), Sport leather steering wheel ($300), 17-inch alloys in black ($2000), Panorama glass sunroof ($1900), Chrome Line interior ($200), chrome-plated exterior mirror caps ($150), Headliner in Anthracite ($300), piano black interior surface ($250), Driving Assistant ($1350), head-up display ($850) and Harman Kardon sound system ($1200)

PEUGEOT 208 GT-LINE

$27,490/As tested $28,780**

Drivetrain

Engine	in-line 3, dohc, 12v, turbo
Layout	front engine (east-west), front drive
Capacity	1199cc
Power	81kW @ 5500rpm
Torque	205Nm @ 1500rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic

Chassis

Body	steel, 5 doors, 5 seats
L/W/H/W–B	3973/1739/1460/2538mm
Front/rear track	1476/1478mm
Weight	1070kg
Boot capacity	311 litres
Fuel/capacity	95 octane/50 litres
Fuel consumption	8.1L/100km (test average)
Suspension	**Front:** struts, A-arms, anti-roll bar **Rear:** torsion beam, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Steering	electric rack-and-pinion
Turning Circle	11.0m (2.8 turns lock-to-lock)
Front brakes	ventilated discs (266mm)
Rear brakes	solid discs (249mm)
Tyres	Michelin Pilot Exalto
Tyre size	205/45R17 88V

Safety

NCAP rating	★★★★★ (AUS)

Performance

Power to weight: 76kW per tonne
Redline/cut-out: 6200/6200rpm
Speed at indicated 100km/h: 97

Speed in gears

1. 44km/h @ 6200rpm
2. 75km/h @ 6200rpm
3. 114km/h @ 6200rpm
4. 153km/h @ 6200rpm
5. 190km/h @ 5670rpm*
6. 174km/h @ 4100rpm

Standing-start acceleration

0-20km/h: 1.1sec
0-40km/h: 2.5sec
0-60km/h: 4.6sec
0-80km/h: 7.4sec
0-100km/h: 11.0sec
0-120km/h: 15.7sec
0-140km/h: 22.9sec
0-160km/h: –
0-400m: 17.6sec @ 132.2km/h

Rolling acceleration: Drive

80-120km/h: 8.1sec

Braking distance

100km/h-0: 39.2m

Verdict

7.0/10

Design; handling; space; packaging; dash; comfort; value; efficiency; boot

Chassis and performance don't live up to its styling; no manual option

Track: Heathcote dragstrip, dry. Temp: 17°C. Driver: Byron Mathioudakis. * Manufacturer's claim. Warranty: 3yr/100,000km. Service interval: 15,000km/12 months. Redbook 3-year resale: 52%. AAMI Insurance: $918
** Includes metallic paint ($990) and rear-view camera ($300)

RENAULT CLIO GT PREM'

$28,990/As tested $29,540**

Drivetrain

Engine	in-line 4, dohc, 16v, turbo
Layout	front engine (east-west), front drive
Capacity	1197cc
Power	88kW @ 4900rpm
Torque	190Nm @ 2000rpm
Transmission	6-speed dual-clutch

Chassis

Body	steel, 5 doors, 5 seats
L/W/H/W–B	4063/1732/1448/2589mm
Front/rear track	1501/1505mm
Weight	1120kg
Boot capacity	300 litres
Fuel/capacity	95 octane/45 litres
Fuel consumption	10.0L/100km (test average)
Suspension	**Front:** struts, A-arms, anti-roll bar **Rear:** torsion beam, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Steering	electric rack-and-pinion
Turning Circle	10.6m (2.7 turns lock-to-lock)
Front brakes	ventilated discs (258mm)
Rear brakes	drums (228mm)
Tyres	Michelin Primacy 3
Tyre size	205/45R17 88V

Safety

NCAP rating	★★★★★ (AUS)

Performance

Power to weight: 78kW per tonne
Redline/cut-out: 6500/6300rpm
Speed at indicated 100km/h: 97

Speed in gears

1. 46km/h @ 6300rpm
2. 75km/h @ 6300rpm
3. 114km/h @ 6300rpm
4. 160km/h @ 6300rpm
5. 199km/h @ 6000rpm*
6. 199km/h @ 4850rpm*

Standing-start acceleration

0-20km/h: 1.6sec
0-40km/h: 3.1sec
0-60km/h: 5.1sec
0-80km/h: 7.8sec
0-100km/h: 10.9sec
0-120km/h: 15.6sec
0-140km/h: 21.7sec
0-160km/h: –
0-400m: 17.9sec @ 131.5km/h

Rolling acceleration: Drive

80-120km/h: 7.6sec

Braking distance

100km/h-0: 37.1m

Verdict

7.5/10

Rorty nature; handling; ride; comfort; design; value; practicality

Transmission delay at take-off; no manual option; no AEB availability

Track: Heathcote dragstrip, dry. Temp: 17°C. Driver: Byron Mathioudakis. * Manufacturer's claim. Warranty: 5yr/unlimited km. Service interval: 15,000km/12months. Redbook 3-year resale: 52%. AAMI Insurance: $911
** Includes metallic paint ($550)

The standout siblings

Searing S1 aside, the 1.0TFSI is our favourite A1 variant, even over the more powerful (but heavier and less wieldy) 92kW 1.4TFSI S-tronic, whose $30,400 sticker matches the Mini Cooper for price and spec. Similarly, we ignored the entry-level Mini One ($28,400 with 75kW 1.2 and auto). While it's the cheapest-ever BMW-era Mini, the boggo model is just that, lumped with a plastic wheel, hubcaps and no cruise control.

on the firm side. The lack of a rear-seat courtesy light is also a mean omission. Up front, the centre console's shape tends to foul passenger knees, and the glovebox is frustratingly small, but otherwise the Renault scores for superb instruments, alluringly comfy front seats and sound placement of most switches and controls.

Keeping in mind that our test Cooper heaved with extra gear, the overall interior presentation is defined by a solid, quality look and feel, even if the car's signature styling cues – rounded centre screen, toggle switches and circular themes – are wearing thin.

Speaking of thin, the Mini's stunted rear doors look a little odd (in a 1950s Austin A30 sort of way) and restrict entry/egress. Also, thick pillars and a high shoulder line impact vision, the optional sunroof reduces head room (with a mesh 'blockout' that doesn't), the glovebox is meagre, and an infernal rattle undermined the otherwise premium aura. Yet the optional sports front seats shine, the driving position is first class, there are rear-seat cupholders and grab handles, and the ergonomics are good.

All the same, the 208 takes the cake for packaging and comfort, scoring for space, practicality, useability and, above all, interior style. Despite lacking a rear-seat area light, grab handles and adequate glovebox, the Pug's ambience matches the exterior's aggressiveness. Further bonuses include body-hugging front seats, a classy fascia featuring the brand's controversial (but effective) low-wheel/high-binnacle positioning, elegant instrument markings, ventilation aplenty and appreciably deep windows. But we were irked by loose-trim noises and fat A-pillars that obscure traffic.

Every car here has pros and cons, but they're all really capable and likeable urban runabouts, so each deserves a podium finish. There isn't a dog among them, and we'd happily recommend all four seeing just half a star separates last from first.

Every car here is really capable and likeable. There's not a dog among them

That said, the A1 Sportback 1.0 TFSI is showing its age, despite possessing a soaring new drivetrain. While hardly putting a foot wrong (rear-seat accommodation aside), it is a tad vanilla. For the money that affords this cool crew, a bit more pizzazz would be appreciated. It finishes equal third with the Peugeot.

The 208 radiates with the best packaging, equipment levels and value, while being the prettiest inside and out. But more va-va-voom from both the engine and chassis would be nice because neither quite manage to complement the GT-Line's GTi-esque styling. Tauter suspension and uprated engine tuning (like the 308's 96kW gem) might have done the trick.

The fight for top spot is a contest between the best all-round package (Mini) and the most exhilarating yet comfortable drive (Clio GT). The Cooper's commanding performance lead, without any sacrifice to economy, underscores BMW's sound engineering, while the Renault hits back hard with affordability, ownership and overall dynamic satisfaction.

In the end, the Cooper gets the guernsey, though buyers should stump up for adaptive dampers. Yet even without them the Mini scores a slim but deserved victory – a big result given how appealing all four of these premium baby hatches are.

READ YOUR **FAVOURITE MAGAZINES** ON ANY DEVICE!

More than forty titles available!

Read ANYWHERE, ANYTIME on ANYTHING!

Search for your **favourite magazines** on these Apps and websites.

Download on the App Store | Google play | MAGZTER | zinio | MAGSHOP

Apple, the Apple logo and iPad are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

Showroom

THE COMPLETE LISTING OF NEW PASSENGER CARS IN AUSTRALIA

OUR GARAGE 126 CLASSIC WHEELS 158 RETRO 160 WHEELSTORIES 162

Your shiny Showroom navigation guide

Fuel RON included in data columns; 'issue tested' dates include Fresh Metal; long-termers park in Our Garage; Incoming and Marketplace live up front in Redline

ALFA TO VOLVO Pages tagged by marque for easy flip/find

ABBREV. INDEX Data columns explained here

TICK & CROSS The things we love, and bits we don't

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

White party

Given that many C63 S (and E63 S) owners also possess an AMG SUV of some kind, my Christmas companion was just that – a GLE63 S Coupe, in glossy white with silver 22s and side steps. Not my choice in livery, that's for sure, but its elevated driving position proved brilliant for spotting the police up ahead during NSW's double-demerit blitz, and its burbly V8 never stopped filling the cabin with lusciousness. Back seat flipped and loaded with enough gear for a week inland from Byron Bay, the GLE63 S

Waking up the neighbours

Monster V8 rumbles into our Garage

SPEED DIAL
Multi-digit, dial-and-touchpad control interface is reasonably intuitive, allowing you to scrawl letters and numbers, or twist and press

NEW ARRIVAL

MERCEDES-AMG C63 S

Date acquired: December 2015
Price as tested: $165,610
This month: 368km @ 23.3L/100km
Overall: 368km @ 23.3L/100km

002881 KM WEEK 5

URBAN ✗ COUNTRY ✗ SPORTS ✗ FAMILY ✗ MOTORWAY

served us well, though craggy, narrow back roads exposed its truck-like size and weight, and its Harman/Kardon stereo proved unexpectedly mediocre. Reasonable economy, though – 14.7L/100km over 1911km at an average of 68km/h – especially compared to the C63's full-traffic figure of 23.3L/100km...

MY NEW long-term ride has arrived with a bang – literally, according to neighbour Amber, who thinks the C63 S's sports exhaust sounds like a bomb going off when I crank it over in the backyard.

In Lamborghini fashion, a cold start in the twin-turbo V8 AMG means a fairly high initial idle and, if the centre-console button with dual-exhaust icon is depressed, enough bass to rattle a neighbourhood that appears to have more interest in efficient public transport than the machismo of AMG's breathed-upon C-Class.

Exhaust rumble aside, this Iridium Silver C63 S has blended into the local landscape a little more politely than the black BMW M4 manual coupe I piloted for four months a year ago. The litany of high-vis-wearing workmen renovating and constructing like crazy in Sydney's Inner West appear to care less for the AMG's subtly flared bodywork and 'stock' star-shaped 19-inch wheels than they did for the M4's black-on-black badness, though I reckon that's a good thing.

Only those who truly appreciate automotive aggression will spot this C63's carbon-ceramic front brake rotors ($9900 extra) and four massive bronze-painted calipers, as well as its semi-slick Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres ($1200), but that's part of the beauty of this car. It's not trying to be anything more than it is, though the sum of its parts produces a pretty stupendous overall tally. A twin-turbo V8, brilliant AMG Performance sports seats, a panoramic glass roof and a thunderous 13-speaker Burmester stereo will do that to a car.

But don't be fooled by its relatively understated exterior. This is a pretty serious performance car – certainly more serious than I'd expected. Given I was coming into this long-term loan cold (I hadn't even sat in a W205 C63), its very disciplined ride, even in Comfort mode, and sports-focused transmission came as something of a surprise.

The C63's ride is fine for my tolerant cheeks, though others have expressed a desire for greater compliance. And the Speedshift-MCT seven-speed transmission takes some getting used to. In Comfort drivetrain mode, it always starts in second gear, which means off-the-line getaways require a fair amount of right-foot travel to muster all that turbocharged torque into action. And if you're in a hurry, it can be inordinately slow to obey commands and get moving. The more you try and rush it – particularly when engaging reverse – the slower it seems to be ... which sounds just like me getting ready to go out. Snap!

The carbon brakes have proven superbly effective in town, without any screeching or dead-pedal response, even when cold. And while the semi-slicks require some care during a Sydney rain dump, they're grippier than you'd think. That said, even in the dry, with ESP Sport hiding in the wings, the C63 S has more than enough muscle to break traction.

When I collected 1DF-6IS from Mercedes-Benz's warehouse in December, it was parked in front of a white Edition 1 Estate, with black 19s, red accents and all the toughness I'd have probably ordered myself had a $165K performance car been on the shopping list. But I now really appreciate this silver sedan's understated menace. Especially after my gauche Christmas ride (see breakout). Here's hoping the police view it the same way when I inevitably tackle the Putty Road to the Hunter Valley in the coming weeks.

NATHAN PONCHARD

OurGarage

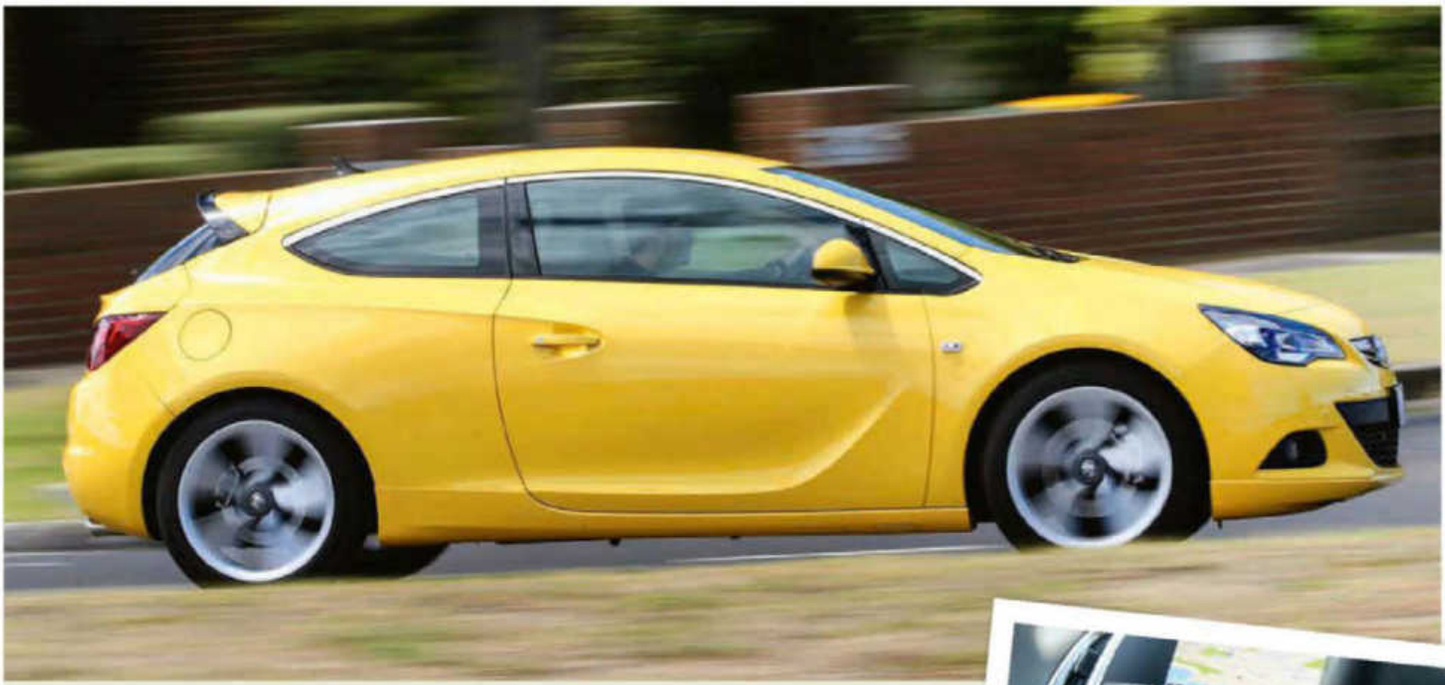
HOLDEN ASTRA GTC SPORT
Date acquired: November 2015
Price as tested: $29,990
This month: 912km @ 10.4L/100km
Overall: 2600km @ 8.5L/100km

008600 WEEK 8

✓ URBAN ✗ COUNTRY ✗ SPORTS ✓ FAMILY ✓ MOTORWAY

Save it, sucker

Oh what a fuel-sucking fool I've been this month. After recording an impressive 6.6 in month one, I became overconfident about how efficient the Astra is. I should have remembered last month's reading was helped by long stints on the freeway; instead I descended into lead-footed madness, racing between lights and shifting at the 6500rpm redline. Heavy traffic compounded the issue. The result was a dismal 10.4 for month two. Hopefully the next reading is somewhere in the middle of those extremes.



A more intimate affair

As the fiery first flush of their new relationship softens, Inwood discovers the Astra's deeper charms

THE second month of any relationship is often more difficult than the first. Mostly this is because, having already acknowledged obvious strengths and weaknesses, month two is devoted to a deeper kind of critique.

Instead of noticing your partner's sense of style, for example, which you once thought effortless and beautiful, you begin to fixate on some not-so-smooth details. Or a slightly dumpy behind that gives the impression of having soiled one's underpants. It's these little foibles that can make or break a relationship. And so it is with my Astra.

Now familiar with the broad strokes of its ability, I've begun to delve deeper into the nitty gritty of its personality. Most of what I've uncovered is positive, like using the cruise control, which is not only a breeze to operate but doesn't disengage when I press the clutch to change gears. This means that, unlike most manual cars, I don't have to keep resetting the system every time I drive up a hill or slot into a higher gear to save fuel.

The idle-stop function is brilliant, too, and has none of the frustrating jerkiness or sluggishness of other systems. Select neutral at the lights and the Astra seamlessly shuts off the engine before restarting quickly when you depress the clutch.

I've also realised why gripping the leather steering wheel imparts such a strong sense of sportiness. While it might look round, it's actually subtly shaped like a hexagon, with a flat bottom and moulded sides for your hands.

The biggest revelation, though, has been the MyLink system. After initially dismissing it as convoluted and pointless, I've since familiarised myself with the idiosyncrasies of its many menus and now use it on every journey. The sat-nav is quick to react to wrong turns and rivals Google Maps for selecting the fastest route.

I've developed an unhealthily dependant relationship with the female tones of the voice command, which understands nearly all of my requests and reads me my text messages in a soft American accent.

MAKING SENSE
The button-heavy dash has become more familiar with use. And the MyLink system handles calls and messages with ease

Better still, MyLink lets you respond to texts while driving. Hitting the reply button throws up a screen of pre-programmed replies, which after a month of replying to everything with "Call me, I'm driving" I've now discovered can be altered or rewritten altogether to suit your needs.

So, far from spoiling the relationship with crooked teeth, month two has revealed a welcome depth to the Astra's personality, to match its swoopy, good-looking exterior. I've stumbled across some new foibles, the most annoying being air conditioning that struggles to provide the icy coolness I'm used to from Aussie-built Holdens, but so far the positives easily outweigh the negatives.

ALEX INWOOD

AUDI Q7 3.0TDI QUATTRO
Date acquired: December 2015
Price as tested: $129,850
This month: 1905km @ 7.9L/100km
Overall: 1905km @ 7.9L/100km

005074 WEEK 3

URBAN COUNTRY SPORTS FAMILY MOTORWAY

Feeling right at home

The fact that the Q7 feels so at home on Australian roads shouldn't be a surprise. Australia's penchant for large luxury SUVs is so high we rate as the sixth-biggest market for Q7s worldwide. Oz falls outside the top 10 for every other Audi model. Australia is so important to the Q7's success that Audi conducted more than 11,000km of testing on Aussie roads to ensure its SUV flagship can cope with our barren land's rough roads and extreme temperatures.

Festive moves

Father Christmas brings a COTY contender back for the holidays

IT'S NO secret we like the all-new, second-generation Audi Q7 here at *Wheels*. Anyone who read last month's COTY issue will know it came tantalisingly close to winning our most coveted award, thanks to a blend of cutting-edge technology, sorted dynamics and supreme refinement.

But while we've spent thousands of kilometres testing the Q7's ability, we're yet to live with one on a day-to-day basis. Which is why I grabbed the keys to this Q7 for the Christmas break. This test, while not a proper long-term exercise, might still expose any annoying bugbears that could undermine the ownership experience.

As well as seeing if Audi's SUV could cope with the choking traffic around my inner-city Melbourne home, I'd planned a 1000km road trip to visit family in central NSW.

The Q7 might have dropped 240kg over its predecessor, but there's no escaping the fact that this 2060kg SUV is still a big bus. Yet on crowded city streets it doesn't feel it. The light electric steering imparts an unexpected sense of nimbleness, undermined somewhat by a rather rotund 12.4-metre turning circle.

Out on the highway, the Q7 comes into its own. This is the type of interstate slog Audi designed it for, so it's no surprise the Q7 chewed through the 10-hour journey with ease. Four passengers and the family dog fit with space to spare, the air conditioning is brilliant, the whisper-quiet cabin has class-leading refinement and the ride on optional air-suspension is silken and cosseting, well worth the additional $4950.

It was surprising how little diesel the smooth-spinning 3.0-litre TDI drank. COTY testing on twisty rural roads saw the Q7 return a surprisingly high figure of 11.1L/100km, but on the expanses of the Hume it sipped at 7.3L/100km. Overall, with city driving included, the efficiency reading was 7.9L/100km, which is hugely impressive for a two-tonne SUV with this level of effortless performance.

Less convincing is the Eco setting in the Drive Select system. It failed to return any real efficiency gain and instead robbed the torquey Q7 of its ability due to a doughy throttle and sluggish engine response. Comfort mode is the smarter option.

The idle-stop system takes an infuriatingly long time to restart, but other systems are more successful, including the optional adaptive cruise control and lane-keep assist.

The retractable 8.3-inch centre screen garnered praise as it allowed passengers to control the sat-nav and music; good luck doing this in the new TT, with its driver-focused virtual cockpit. The only real complaint levelled at the Q7's beautifully made interior was that the front passenger seat is too flat and lacking in lateral support.

Are these minor foibles enough to tarnish the Q7's polish? Absolutely not. During its three-week stay, the Q7 dealt with city traffic, thousands of freeway kays and cracked rural roads as easily as Roger Federer would breeze through your local Tuesday night tennis comp. So if you're looking for a big seven-seat luxury SUV, your hunt just might be over.

ALEX INWOOD

WEALTH OF CHOICE
Most useful storage option is a cubby behind the gearstick that's big enough for two phones, house keys and wallet

Putting the 'lairy' into Celerio

During COTY, some of the more excitable judges, energised by the Celerio's punchy three-pot performance and unflappable high-speed grip, ripped off the hubcaps and started imagining what it would look like with matte-black wrapping or racing stripes, and a set of fog lights. We decided against pimping it out but still chose the clean slate that is the Snow White Pearl flat finish (for $0 extra over metallic), while Suzuki fitted the $200 'Driving Lamps' for a bit of street cred.

Wakin' up to Little Suzi

Australia's cheapest new car enters our garage

NEW ARRIVAL

TALK about hiding your light under a bushel. In the year since Suzuki 'launched' the all-new Celerio (if doing nothing more than issuing a press release on a news media website qualifies as such), we've found ourselves constantly justifying our approval for this $12,990-driveaway runabout.

Replacing the Alto, which was built by Maruti of India, the LF-series four-seat five-door baby that comes to us from Thailand may seem like a retrograde step styling-wise, trading its predecessor's chic design for something that looks somewhat like Chicken Little on wheels. But along the way Australia's cheapest new car gains a whole lot more beauty elsewhere, thanks to far better packaging, functionality, quality, refinement, safety and – not least – driveability.

Even a brief spin reveals just how far Suzuki's base hatch has come.

The Celerio – the name combines 'celestial' and 'river' in Spanish, but we know not why – is 3.6m long by 1.6m wide and an unusually high 1.5m tall, while the 2425mm wheelbase is just 5mm short of the current Swift's. It therefore transcends its class with more than enough space for four adults and a very reasonable 254-litre cargo capacity.

As well as being relatively spacious, the Celerio's pleasingly presented and finished cabin also offers clear instruments and controls, heaps of storage and even a couple of unexpected items such as Bluetooth audio streaming with track info and steering wheel-mounted phone buttons.

Its vital statistics also include six airbags, stability control, air-con, remote central locking, power windows, height-only steering column adjustment and space-saver spare.

More vitally, a commanding seating position and deep windows make manoeuvring in tight spots simple, the steering is light when parking but firms up reassuringly at higher speeds, and as zesty as the spirited 50kW/90Nm 998cc three-pot is, the chassis feels planted enough to cry out for more power, yet still delivers an outstandingly supple ride.

Obviously, there has been some clever

SUZUKI CELERIO
Date acquired: December 2015
Price as tested: $13,190
This month: 1423km @ 5.3L/100km
Overall: 1423km @ 5.3L/100km

002630 WEEK 4

✓ URBAN ✓ COUNTRY ✗ SPORTS ✗ FAMILY ✓ MOTORWAY

Sounds alright

It might be Australia's cheapest car, but the Celerio's attention to detail is impressive. Case in point is the standard-fitment Bluetooth streaming audio; it switches across from another source straight away, remains connected without dropping out after a couple of hours, features artist/album/track info, and even sounds OK – a hat-trick that many mainstream carmakers have yet to master. Additionally, phone call quality is good, even at speed, with both parties clearly understood at both ends.

suspension tuning going on. Over its four-year gestation, Suzuki says benchmarks have included the Volkswagen Up, Fiat Panda and Hyundai i10. All are at the pointy end of the sub-B segment in Europe, though none are currently available in Oz, sadly.

So it's hardly a shock that, considering its price point, the Celerio went on to surprise the hardened judges at COTY, becoming one of the more charming contenders despite its humble station in life. People just assume this is a shitbox until they slip behind the wheel. Just watching their faces light up when they do is rather satisfying.

Indeed, it was during the recent COTY examination that sub-B fan-boy and *Wheels* road-test editor Nathan Ponchard agreed to put the Suzuki under the long-termer microscope. We decided to find out if our admiration is a case of just an ordinary car far exceeding initial expectations, or is there still enough substance to see us through living with it for a few months?

We chose the manual because, despite the (completely adequate) CVT version costing just $1000 more, the five-speeder keeps the price at rock-bottom level.

That's also why we dismissed the $475 metallic paint option, though the Cerulean Blue and Sunshine Yellow really do liven up the palette nicely.

The only option we did ask for – cruise control – is not even available. Nor, for that matter, is Autonomous Emergency Braking. It's not surprising, therefore, that the Celerio scores only a four-star ANCAP rating, though that's partly due to poor pedestrian pelvis protection on impact.

The car's arrival is a timely one because Kia will attempt to shake up the so-called Micro class with the European-engineered Picanto from about April, while a Holden insider has admitted that the Celerio was one of the yardsticks employed for the MP-series Spark that will soon replace the lamentable Barina Spark. A baby battle royale looms…

BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

GOING DOTTY
It may be hard wearing, but the polka-dot seat trim brings a Zoe Deschanel/Lucille Ball (pic your generation) cheer inside

OurGarage

FORD FOCUS SPORT
Date acquired: December 2015
Price as tested: $26,910
This month: 3096km @ 8.0L/100km
Overall: 3299km @ 8.0L/100km

006318 3/4 WEEK 8

✗ URBAN ✓ COUNTRY ✗ SPORTS ✗ FAMILY ✗ MOTORWAY

Summertime, and the living is easy
The Focus proved easy to live with on holiday. The keyless entry – and start – made loading luggage easy, as did the impressive global closing, which winds up all the windows from the key fob as you walk away; a neat party trick. The cloth seat trim cleans up with a mere wipe and the 60/40 split rear seat means easy access to valuables hidden in the boot, which is huge. There's also loads of space up front for phones, wallets, coffee cups and water bottles, as well as a deep centre console.

The back-up plan

Taking the alternate choice redefines 'winning'

I'LL admit the Focus wasn't the first choice for our summer beach trip. It wasn't a lightweight roadster like the luscious red MX-5 that also sat out the front. But it boasted four fully inflated tyres (the Mazda didn't) and even a space-saver spare in the boot (again, the MX-5 failed to oblige, but more on that next month when I reveal how the editor's new long termer started its life at *Wheels* in my care).

The fact we had a pure driver's car marooned at home, and one of the world's most amazing coastlines to explore, had us initially lamenting the more humble hatchback. So we loaded up the 'Winning Blue' Ford – feeling far from having won – before the three-hour drive to Port Fairy on Victoria's glorious Shipwreck Coast.

Immediately, though, the Focus showed its skills as one of the best C-segment hatches. I love driving holidays because there's no carry-on limit, so I overpack.

On the road, my girlfriend – who comments on cars as much as Donald Trump comments on equality – said, "It's good that there are two USB slots," allowing my smartphone to feed while hers spun tunes. We also used something else the MX-5 lacks, a CD player. The Focus stereo, operated via the steering wheel, isn't outstanding, but it's far from disappointing.

Then there's the sat-nav (something else our base-spec MX-5 didn't have). The voice activation works effectively and the directions are spoken aloud after an audible tone that sounds like an aircraft 'fasten-seatbelt' chime. There's also graphical direction in the instrument cluster to follow after we'd set the destination and mindlessly headed south-west.

Along the way, the Focus's seats proved supportive even after several hours, and the air-con blasts cool air to easily deal with 40-degree summer days. Oddly, though, it's either blasting or doing not much at all; there's no 'soft' setting when you're after a zephyr. Above the vents, that expansive dashboard proved a great place to dry clothes after a beach swim, but the windscreen reflections wouldn't budge.

On the winding stuff, where I thought I'd miss the MX-5 most, the Focus didn't disappoint. Its poise on the sinewy Skenes Creek Road through the Otways, where we'd been diverted after a beautiful trip down the Great Ocean Road because of the Lorne bushfire, was brilliant. The Michelin rubber is the weak link; they're made more for smooth ride and quietness than out-and-out cornering, the fronts scrubbing easily.

Yet the warbling grunt of that 1.5-litre turbo, slick six-speed manual and overall balance made it a hoot through the forest, where I forgot about the MX-5. Almost.

DAMION SMY

SUMMER LOVIN'
The fabric trim is durable and cleans up as good as new after constant abuse. It's better than leather in hot weather

VOLVO XC90 D5
Date acquired: November 2015
Price as tested: $93,085
This month: 626km @ 11.1L/100km
Overall: 2110km @ 9.9L/100km

005476 WEEK 9

URBAN COUNTRY SPORTS FAMILY MOTORWAY

Lessons learned this month

One: The XC90's fuel filler won't accept an ordinary jerry-can nozzle; a secondary flap in the filler neck stops it. Using the wrong nozzle involves a diesel bath. Two: Said nozzle lives in the spare wheel well, beneath the cargo bay, but you won't know this until you read the owner's manual. Three: The Volvo's printed owner's manual doesn't detail where the fuel nozzle is located. Four: The electronic owner's manual, accessed via the touchscreen, is simple and easy to use. Five: The touchscreen doesn't respond well to a diesel-coated digit.

Marriage is a fuel's game

Mrs Bulmer's precision driving leaves hubbry dry

BLEEDIN' GOOD CHANGE
Thank goodness for modern diesels with high-pressure fuel systems that don't need to be bled after running dry

THE bloke who coined the phrase "lightning never strikes twice" obviously hadn't met my Dearly Beloved.

The ink was still drying on the February issue of *Wheels*, including my inauspicious introduction to our new Volvo long-termer and its tale of a Good-Wife-left-stranded-on-the-side-of-a-road-due-to-a-misunderstanding-with-the-fuel-gauge, when… it happened again.

In a veritable master class of economy driving, the Better Half managed to calculate her trajectory so perfectly as to get Black Betty home and neatly aligned in front of our garage, with but a thimble full of fuel left in its 71-litre tank.

So, when the Darling Thing called to suggest that perhaps I ought to consider grabbing a small pot of diesel on the way home, I thought, 'Surely she jests'. But the joke, as the Bee Gees once harmonised, was on me.

Talking through the scenario, I gathered that the Volvo had arrived home under its own steam, but that the trip computer was indicating a big fat zero in the distance to empty column. "No problem," I countered, with the emphatic air of a man who knows what he's talking about. "Trip computers generally err on the pessimistic side, so there'll be enough to get to the servo." The 'servo' in this instance being fully half a kilometre away.

Arriving home *sans* diesel, I probed a little further as to the cause of my spouse's alarm. "Well, it's making a funny sound when you try to start it," she cautioned. "Hmm, but it is starting?" I enquired. Nod.

So, to the XC90 I went, sliding into its gorgeously-sculpted tan leather seats and turning the ignition switch with the casual confidence of a Man Who Understands Such Things.

There followed a few seconds cranking, perhaps a half moment more than is the norm, before the 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel rattled, fired and settled into its comfortable idle. I in turn smugly settled back into the plush leather, flush with the knowledge I had once again shown Man's mastery of machine.

Selecting reverse, I used the camera image on the excellent 12.3-inch touchscreen to guide me back down our tricky driveway and into our neighbour's, where I selected 'D' and… the music died.

Once I'd finished banging my forehead repeatedly on the XC90's leather-trimmed wheel, I was forced to accept several things. First, Volvo trip computers don't lie. Second, when my wife says, 'The car is out of fuel', it really is OUT of fuel. Third, should my wife ever decide to pursue a new career, I see a *huge* future for her in the US sport of hypermiling, where geeks attempt to extract the optimum mileage from their Toyota Prius hybrids.

Frankly, I don't think the man they call the 'Father of Hypermiling', Wayne Gerdes, stands a chance.

GED BULMER

Seeing double, at last

One good thing about owning a Picasso is that you would always feel special, and different. Drive any car around a big city for more than a fortnight and you'll see one exactly the same as yours, no matter how obscure it is, but I didn't see another Picasso in the time I had it. And then, finally, I did, just a suburb away from mine, in the same colour and spec and in regular residence. I can only hope it was bought by someone who reads *Wheels*, and wanted to drive their wife insane.

Park it, partner

Not even a clever party trick wins over Mrs Corby

THOSE of us who take pride in our driving are, quite frankly, mildly offended by the idea of autonomous-parking systems (and even more so by Google cars), because we're pretty bloody fantastic at reverse parking already, thanks very much.

As such, I had no intention of testing the Park Assist system on the Picasso until a colleague, who is equally befuddled by my wife's hatred of this cool Citroen as I am, suggested it might be the final, and best, roll of the dice to win her over.

Just to make sure that it wasn't going to let me down, and send her on another mouth-frothing rant (she's even started to hate the actual Picasso's art works, just on principle), I decided to test it out privately, and it was then that something strange happened.

It shouldn't have surprised me that a car designed to cope with the parking spaces of Paris, which are generally smaller than even a clown's car, should be able to park itself with ingenious alacrity. And yet still I was blown away by the cleverness of the system, and how it's able to pull off reverse parks that I would never have bothered to attempt myself. Spaces so small you had to use the Park Assist again to get you out (yes, it does that too – tres clever!).

Almost as impressed were my children, who thought the hands-free "robot parking" was something akin to witchcraft, or better yet, Star Wars-tech.

Speaking of which, my son was beside himself this month when we found some under-floor storage bins just in front of the rear seats that we'd never seen before. He spent most of the next day trying to smuggle himself in them, Millennium Falcon-style. I fear he might be a simpleton, but at least he has good taste in films.

After finding myself using the autonomous parking with an almost disturbing regularity, I felt it was finally time to blow Mrs Corby away with a demonstration of Citroen technologique and found a suitably squeezy spot in Bronte Beach, where finding a space can add months to your life, or take years off your marriage.

The Picasso performed brilliantly, but did bump the kerb lightly at one stage on the way in, without at all scratching the wheel, and yet this small failure was all she could focus on, before spewing forth words like "pointless", "hate" and "this (expletive) car", as usual.

So I give up. While I thought this would be the perfect car for a harried mum who's obsessed with "visuals", the only time Citroen's MPV-of-sorts actually impressed her was when we laid the seats flat to pile the back with Christmas bicycles.

I, on the other hand, loved its styling, its screens, its utility, seats, suspension and, goddamn it, clever self-parking tech.

Sadly, the sticking point for me would be the idle-stop system, which is clunky, jerky, poorly designed and, eventually, annoyed me pretty much every day, particularly because it takes an unnecessary three-button screen dance to turn it off.

That quirk, alongside the price and my wife's intransigence, would put me off buying one, but I would still advise other people with small families to seriously consider the Picasso. Did I mention it can park itself?

STEPHEN CORBY

THE UPRIGHT POSITION
Side window blinds and aeroplane-style trays scored significant brownie points with the kids in the back seat

CITROEN C4 PICASSO
Date acquired: June 2015
Price as tested: $47,890
This month: 714km @ 12.5L/100km
Overall: 3790km @ 10.1L/100km

✓ URBAN ✗ COUNTRY ✗ SPORTS ✓ FAMILY ✓ MOTORWAY

Why not go Grand?

I don't know why anyone who'd entered a Citroen showroom to buy a C4 Picasso wouldn't be entirely distracted by how much better the Grand Picasso is. You might not think you need seven seats, but with kids those times will come, and you're getting so much more for very little more money (from $44,990). Best of all, you get a more tractable, more driveable diesel that will save you a fortune at the pump compared with the not particularly frisky, PULP-only petrol powerplant in the smaller C4. Go big, I say. Go Grand.

FAREWELL

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T=turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in sec s (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F=Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

Alfa Romeo

3yr/100,000km
www.alfaromeo.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Giulietta	Old name, new promise													
✓ Engines; steering; suspension and handling. Cabin space, even. Finally, a proper Alfa! ✗ Cabin's lack of storage; plastics not to VW standard; our favourite hubcaps are dead • **The Pick:** Top-spec QV. Or the great-riding, torquey, freshly upgraded base model														
Progression	$29,000	L4T	1.4	88	215	M6	1259	9.4	–	6.4	95	41		F
Distinctive	$33,000	L4T	1.4	125	250	M6	1269	*7.5*	*15.3*	5.7	95	42	11/14	F
Distinctive	$35,000	L4T	1.4	125	250	S6	1284	7.6	–	5.1	95	42		F
QV	$39,000	L4T	1.7	173	340	M6	1299	6.8	–	7.6	95	47	03/11	F
QV	$42,000	L4T	1.7	177	340	S6	1299	6.0	–	7.0	95	47	04/15	F
4C	Alfisti rejoice!													
✓ Lightweight carbon-fibre body; exciting dynamics; bucketloads of charisma ✗ Firm seats; uninspiring exhaust note in cabin; love-it-or-hate-it steering; zero storage • **The Pick:** Save $20K and revel in the better-riding, slightly less hardcore standard 4C														
Coupe	$89,000	L4T	1.7	177	350	S6	1025	4.5	–	6.8	95	64		R
Spider	$99,000	L4T	1.7	177	350	S6	1035	4.6	–	6.8	95			R
Launch Edition	$109,000	L4T	1.7	177	350	S6	1025	*4.6*	*12.8*	6.8	95	64	06/15	R

Aston Martin

3yr/unlimited
www.astonmartin.com

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Vantage	Superstar styling, but ageing													
✓ Stunning looks, spectacular-sounding engines, much rarer than a 911 ✗ Cabin dated and pretty tight; purists will prefer its sharper, newer rivals • **The Pick:** V12 from the Vanquish provides serious shove with little weight penalty														
V8 Coupe	$231,000	V8	4.7	313	470	M6	1630	4.9	–	13.8	95	63	08/07	R
V8 Coupe	$246,900	V8	4.7	313	470	S7	1630	4.9	–	12.9	95	63		R
V8 Roadster	$260,000	V8	4.7	313	470	M6	1690	4.9	–	13.8	95	63		R
V8 Roadster	$273,800	V8	4.7	313	470	S7	1690	4.9	–	12.9	95	63		R
V8 S Coupe	$251,700	V8	4.7	321	490	M6	1610	4.8	–	13.8	95	63		R
V8 S Coupe	$267,600	V8	4.7	321	490	S7	1610	4.5	–	12.9	95	63		R
V8 S Roadster	$280,600	V8	4.7	321	490	M6	1690	4.8	–	13.8	95	63		R
V12 S Coupe	$354,300	V12	5.9	421	620	S7	–	3.9	–	14.7	95	63		R
V12 S Roadster	$383,525	V12	5.9	421	620	S7	1745	4.1		14.7	95	63		R
DB9	Beauty, and beast													
✓ Like Bond himself, the DB9 is class; wailing V12 is a perfect car-chase accompaniment ✗ Some interior details well below par; not as quick as V12 suggests; tight packaging • **The Pick:** DB9 coupe is sportier and sturdier than the slightly limp-wristed Volante														
Coupe	$349,500	V12	5.9	381	620	A6	1785	4.6	–	14.3	95	58		R
Volante	$380,500	V12	5.9	381	620	A6	1890	4.6	–	14.3	95	58		R
Vanquish	DBS replacement is a stunner													
✓ Arguably the most beautiful modern Aston, still with tingly V12 and new eight-speed auto ✗ Lardy kerb weight; hefty consumption; more a GT than genuine sports car • **The Pick:** In white, thanks, with black wheels and a Ben Sherman Union Jack pillow														
Coupe	$484,995	V12	5.9	421	620	A8	1739	4.1	–	14.4	95	58		R
Volante	$521,995	V12	5.9	421	620	A8	1849	4.3	–	14.4	95	55		R
Rapide	Super sedan													
✓ Gorgeous Aston 'sedan' makes its Porsche Panamera rival look overfed and frumpy ✗ It may look sexy but getting any in its cramped rear quarters would be an achievement • **The Pick:** Good luck securing one – only a handful are coming here and the queue is long														
S	$378,500	V12	5.9	411	630	A8	1990	4.9	–	14.9	95	59		R

Audi

3yr/unlimited
www.audi.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
A1 Sportback	Baby got 'back													
✓ Five-door practicality; cute styling; slick interior; ballsy S1; thrummy turbo three-pot ✗ 1.8 TFSI is more than $10K dearer than a Polo GTI with the same donk • **The Pick:** A 1.0-litre turbo-triple manual is where it's at, with charm, spirit and polish														
1.0 TFSI	$26,900	L3T	1.0	70	160	M5	1060	11.1	–	4.2	95	58		F
1.0 TFSI	$28,250	L3T	1.0	70	160	S7	1090	*11.6*	*18.2*	4.4	95	58	03/16	F
1.4 TFSI Sport	$27,750	L4T	1.4	92	200	M6	1105	8.9	–	5.1	95	59		F
1.4 TFSI Sport	$30,100	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1140	8.9	–	4.9	95	58		F
1.8 TFSI S-Line	$39,900	L4T	1.8	141	250	S7	1205	6.9	–	5.6	95	72		F
S1 quattro	$49,990	L4T	2.0	170	370	M6	1340	5.9	–	7.1	95	59	12/14	A

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
A3 Sportback	Slick conservatism													
✓ All-new platform means less weight, better handling, improved ride, stunning interior ✗ Golf outshines A3 in a few cabin details, yet costs less; new styling is too Audi-generic • **The Pick:** Definitely the spirited, sporty 1.8 TFSI in either FWD or quattro form														
1.4 TFSI Attraction	$35,900	L4T	1.4	92	200	M6	1225	–	–	5.3	95	50		F
1.4 TFSI Attraction	$35,900	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1225	9.3	–	4.9	95	50		F
1.6 TDI Attraction	$36,900	L4TD	1.6	81	250	S7	1280	10.7	–	3.9	D	50		F
1.4 TFSI Attraction CoD	$38,500	L4T	1.4	110	250	S7	1235	8.2	–	4.7	95	50		F
2.0 TDI Ambition	$43,200	L4TD	2.0	110	340	S6	1320	*8.3*	*16.0*	4.4	D	52	08/13	F
1.8 TFSI Ambition	$43,100	L4T	1.8	132	250	M6	1280	–	–	5.8	95	52		F
1.8 TFSI Ambition	$43,100	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1280	7.3	–	5.6	95	52		F
1.8 TFSI quattro	$46,100	L4T	1.8	132	280	S6	1380	6.8	–	6.5	95	52		A
S3	$61,100	L4T	2.0	210	380	M6	1425	5.4	–	7.0	95	60		A
S3	$61,100	L4T	2.0	210	380	S6	1445	5.0	–	6.9	95	60		A
RS3	$78,900	L5T	2.5	270	465	S7	1595	4.3	–	8.1	95			A
e-tron	$62,490	L4TH	1.4	150	350	S6	–	7.6	–	1.6	95	49		F
A3 Sedan	The looker of the A3 line-up													
✓ All the highlights of the Sportback, plus a decent boot; platform and interior both shine ✗ Chopped rear styling restricts headroom; added expense over equivalent A3 Sportback • **The Pick:** 1.8 TFSI is punchy and frugal, and available in front- or all-wheel drive														
1.4 TFSI Attraction CoD	$40,100	L4T	1.4	110	250	S7	1250	8.2	–	4.7	95	53		F
1.8 TFSI Ambition	$45,400	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1295	7.3	–	5.6	95	53		F
2.0 TDI Ambition	$45,500	L4TD	2.0	110	320	S6	1340	8.3	–	4.4	D	53		F
1.8 TFSI quattro	$48,400	L4T	1.8	132	280	S6	1395	6.8	–	6.5	95	54		A
S3	$63,010	L4T	2.0	210	380	M6	1430	5.4	–	7.0	95	60		A
S3	$63,010	L4T	2.0	210	380	S6	1460	*4.8*	*13.2*	6.9	95	60	09/14	A
A3 Cabriolet	Manscaped sun-seeker													
✓ Sedan-based styling much more masculine; strong body; lovely finish; refinement ✗ Adults won't love the rear seat; Ikea fans may need a bigger boot; S3 feels heavy-footed • **The Pick:** The 1.8 TFSI front-driver delivers the best mix of grunt, gear, and value														
1.4 TFSI Attract' CoD	$47,600	L4T	1.4	110	250	S7	1380	8.9		4.9	95	50		F
1.8 TFSI Ambition	$52,200	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1430	7.8	–	5.8	95	52		F
1.8 TFSI quattro	$55,200	L4T	1.8	132	280	S6	1540	7.6	–	6.6	95	52	08/14	A
2.0 TDI Ambition	$52,200	L4TD	2.0	110	340	S6	1480	8.8	–	4.7	D	52	08/14	F
S3	$70,110	L4T	2.0	210	380	S6	1620	5.5	–	7.1	98	60	01/15	A
A4	Solid, smart, updated													
✓ Quattro-only for 2.0-litre models, with lower entry price for new Ambition variants ✗ S4 is now much cheaper, but still needs $7K Sports diff to make it really handle • **The Pick:** 2.0 TFSI manual, riding on the smallest wheels, or either S4 with a Sports diff														
1.8 TFSI	$55,500	L4T	1.8	125	320	C	1470	8.3	–	5.8	95	46		F
1.8 TFSI Avant	$58,500	L4T	1.8	125	320	C	1530	8.4	–	6.0	95	45		F
2.0 TDI Amb. quattro	$59,900	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S7	1595	7.9		5.3	D	45		A
2.0 TDI quattro S line	$67,800	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S7	1595	7.9		5.3	D	47		A
2.0 TFSI Amb qtr.	$57,100	L4T	2.0	165	350	M6	1530	5.9	–	6.6	95	47	09/10	A
2.0 TFSI Amb qtr.	$59,900	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1570	*6.1*	*14.3*	6.7	95	45	12/14	A
2.0 TFSI Am. qtr. Av.	$62,900	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1610	6.5	–	6.9	95	45		A
2.0 TFSI S-Line qtr.	$65,000	L4T	2.0	165	350	M6	1530	5.9	–	6.6	95	47	09/10	A
2.0 TFSI S-Line qtr.	$67,800	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1570	6.4	–	6.7	95	45		A
2.0 TFSI S-Ln. qtr. Av	$70,800	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1610	6.5	–	6.9	95	46		A
S4	$104,610	V6S	3.0	245	440	S7	1705	*4.8*	*13.0*	8.1	98	51	06/14	A
S4 Avant	$108,110	V6S	3.0	245	440	S7	1750	5.1	–	8.4	98	51		A
RS4 Avant	$151,010	V8	4.2	331	430	S7	1795	4.7	–	10.7	98	46		A
A4 Allroad	Allroad stands tall, goes small													
✓ Terrific drivetrain with even more torque and economy for 2015; finish; ride height ✗ Sharply raked tail reduces luggage space; lacks the A6 Allroad's air suspension • **The Pick:** Um, the A4 Allroad. Probably not in black. Be brave and choose a colour!														
2.0 TDI quattro	$70,500	L4TD	2.0	140	400	S7	1730	7.8	–	5.6	D	47	07/15	A
A5 Sportback	Four-door coupe with five seats													
✓ Liftback versatility, with still-great styling; slick cabin; slick engines; lusty and lively S5 ✗ Not the last word in steering feedback, or ride finesse, but getting there • **The Pick:** Manual 2.0 TFSI quattro is a sleeper. Supercharged S5 is a stonker														
1.8 TFSI	$67,810	L4T	1.8	125	320	C	1525	8.4	–	5.9	95	53		F
2.0 TDI	$69,310	L4TD	2.0	130	380	C	1540	7.9	–	4.8	D	53		F
2.0 TDI quattro	$75,910	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S7	1625	7.9	–	5.3	D	57		A
2.0 TFSI quattro	$75,010	L4T	2.0	165	350	M6	1570	6.4	–	6.6	95	64		A
2.0 TFSI quattro	$76,910	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1615	6.5	–	6.7	95	64		A
3.0 TDI quattro	$93,910	V6TD	3.0	180	500	S7	1695	5.9	–	5.7	D	64		A
3.0 TFSI quattro	$97,910	V6S	3.0	200	400	S7	1715	6.0	–	8.1	95	64		A
S5	$119,510	V6S	3.0	245	440	S7	1745	5.1	–	8.1	98	64		A
A5 Coupe	Fresh face, still beautiful													
✓ Performance and economy from all engines; improved steering and suspension ✗ Still not as entertaining as a 4 Series coupe, or as fluent as a C-Class coupe • **The Pick:** Blown V6 at $100K, or the much-improved RS5, now a real contender														
1.8 TFSI	$68,200	L4T	1.8	125	320	C	1455	8.2	–	5.8	95	53		F
2.0 TDI	$69,700	L4TD	2.0	130	380	C	1495	7.8	–	4.7	D	53		F
2.0 TDI quattro	$76,300	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S7	1575	7.8	–	5.3	D	57		A
2.0 TFSI quattro	$75,400	L4T	2.0	165	350	M6	1510	6.5	–	6.8	95	64		A
2.0 TFSI quattro	$77,300	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1550	*6.4*	*14.5*	6.8	95	64	05/14	A
3.0 TDI quattro	$94,300	V6TD	3.0	180	500	S7	1640	5.8	–	5.7	D	64		A
3.0 TFSI quattro	$98,910	V6S	3.0	200	400	S7	1650	5.8	–	8.1	95	64		A
S5	$119,900	V6S	3.0	245	440	S7	1675	4.9	–	8.1	98	64	08/12	A
RS5	$157,510	V8	4.2	331	430	S7	1715	4.5	–	10.5	98	56	10/12	A

wheels
WE'RE SOCIAL!
Join us at facebook.com/WheelsAustralia and Twitter @WheelsAustralia.
We're also on Instagram!

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	A5 Cabriolet — Soft top for smooth roads													
	✅ Usual A5 class and style, mixed with excellent drivetrains and high-quality roof ❌ Body lacks coupe's rigidity and its suspension can deliver a choppy ride • **The Pick:** Base 1.8 TFSI – the more powerful variants highlight its rigidity issues													
1.8 TFSI	$80,700	L4T	1.8	125	320	C	1655	8.9	–	6.2	95	53		F
2.0 TDI	$82,800	L4TD	2.0	130	380	C	1680	8.3	–	5.0	D	53		F
2.0 TFSI quattro	$90,500	L4T	2.0	165	350	S7	1735	7.2	–	6.9	95	64		A
3.0 TDI quattro	$107,200	V6TD	3.0	180	500	S7	1845	6.3	–	5.9	D	64		A
3.0 TFSI quattro	$111,010	V6S	3.0	200	400	S7	1850	6.3	–	8.5	95	64		A
S5	$129,510	V6S	3.0	245	440	S7	1880	5.4	–	8.5	98	64		A
RS5	$177,510	V8	4.2	331	430	S7	1920	4.9	–	10.7	98	56	01/14	A
	A6 — Finely crafted, improved value													
	✅ Great cabin presentation; strong and efficient engines; thrusty bi-turbo TDI, S6 and RS6 ❌ Base wagons deleted; steering still not its strong suit; front-driver is a dynamic dullard • **The Pick:** Fiery RS6 is tempting but either of the quattro diesels fit the bill													
1.8 TFSI	$79,900	L4T	1.8	140	320	S7	1570	7.9	–	5.7	95	43	06/15	F
3.0 TDI quattro	$99,900	V6TD	3.0	160	500	S7	1765	6.6	–	5.1	D	52		A
3.0 TDI Biturbo qttro	$124,900	V6TTD	3.0	235	650	A8	1835	5.0	–	6.1	D	46	06/15	A
S6	$169,510	V8T	4.0	331	550	S7	1895	4.4	–	9.4	95	44	06/15	A
RS6 Avant	$229,110	V8TT	4.0	412	700	A8	1935	3.9	–	9.6	95	53	07/15	A
	A6 Allroad — A6 goodness, elevated													
	✅ Handsome; gorgeous cabin; lush ride quality; strong and silky turbo-diesel V6 ❌ Ride height blunts on-road dynamics; definitely not an off-roader; depreciation • **The Pick:** Still expensive, despite price drop, but A6 Allroad is one of our favourite Audis													
3.0 TDI quattro	$111,510	V6TD	3.0	160	500	S7	1890	7.3	–	5.6	D	44	07/15	A
	A7 Sportback — Mix of A6 and A8, plus panache													
	✅ Adds hatchback versatility, A8-rivalling space and rakish rear styling over an A6 ❌ S7 is all about fast motorways, not tight mountain passes; sizeable premium over A6 • **The Pick:** Twin-turbo diesel delivers on torque and presence, and comes nicely loaded													
3.0 TDI quattro	$115,400	V6TD	3.0	160	500	S7	1825	6.8	–	5.2	D	47	06/15	A
3.0 TDI Biturbo qtro	$144,900	V6TTD	3.0	235	650	A8	1895	5.2	–	6.1	D	42	06/15	A
S7	$179,510	V8T	4.0	331	550	S7	1955	4.6	–	9.3	95	51	06/15	A
RS7	$241,610	V8TT	4.0	412	700	A8	1920	3.5	–	9.5	98	49	07/15	A
	A8 — Refining first-class travel													
	✅ Still one of the most beautiful luxury-sedan interiors; S8's astonishing thrust ❌ Brilliant new S-Class makes the A8/S8 feel dynamically uninvolving and a bit last-decade • **The Pick:** Twin-turbo V8 diesel offers a seductive blend of quality, economy and grunt													
3.0 TDI quattro	$194,610	V6TD	3.0	190	580	A8	1880	5.9	–	5.9	D	45	07/14	A
3.0 TDI quattro LWB	$206,510	V6TD	3.0	190	580	A8	1935	6.1	–	6.0	D	45		A
4.2 TDI quattro	$249,510	V8TTD	4.1	283	850	A8	2040	4.7	–	7.4	D	45	12/13	A
S8	$280,610	V8TT	4.0	382	650	A8	1990	4.1	–	9.6	98	47	12/13	A
	TT — TT take three, done better													
	✅ Engine flexibility; sweet six-speed manual; quattro's all-paw traction; that interior! ❌ Limited engine range for start of third generation; steering light in basic mode • **The Pick:** The manual Sport is tempting but the traction and pace of the quattro wins out													
Sport	$71,950	L4T	2.0	169	370	M6	1230	6.0	–	5.9	95	56	04/15	F
Sport	$74,950	L4T	2.0	169	370	S6	1260	5.9	–	6.3	95	56		F
Sport quattro	$77,950	L4T	2.0	169	370	S6	1335	5.3	–	6.4	95	51	04/15	A
Sport quattro cabrio	$81,500	L4T	2.0	169	370	S6	1410	5.3	–	6.4	95	51		A
S-Line	$78,450	L4T	2.0	169	370	M6	1230	6.0	–	5.9	95	56		F
S-Line	$82,450	L4T	2.0	169	370	S6	1260	5.9	–	6.3	95	56		F
S-Line quattro	$85,450	L4T	2.0	169	370	S6	1335	5.5	13.8	6.4	95	56	06/15	A
S-Line quattro cab'	$89,000	L4T	2.0	169	370	S6	1410	5.3	–	6.4	95	56		A
S quattro	$99,000	L4T	2.0	210	380	S6	1385	4.7	–	6.8	98	51		A
S quattro cabriolet	$103,900	L4T	2.0	210	380	S6	1500	5.0	–	6.9	98	49		A
	R8 — Ageing R8 still a supermodel													
	✅ Supremely driveable supercar that still looks a million bucks; brilliant dual-clutch 'box ❌ Steering requires plenty of lock to turn in; lacks 911's feedback and Gallardo's dartiness • **The Pick:** The V10 Plus: lighter, louder and sharper, yet still liveable													
4.2 FSI quattro	$279,110	V8	4.2	316	430	M6	1560	4.6	–	14.2	98	53		A
4.2 FSI quattro	$287,110	V8	4.2	316	430	S7	1585	4.3	–	12.4	98	53		A
5.2 FSI quattro	$366,510	V10	5.2	386	530	S7	1645	3.6	–	13.1	98	53		A
5.2 FSI Plus quattro	$407,810	V10	5.2	404	540	S7	1595	3.5	–	12.9	98	53	05/13	A
	R8 Spyder — Less roof, more exhaust noise!													
	✅ Takes the R8's supercar sex appeal to a whole new level ❌ Added 100kg and subtracted body rigidity affects dynamics (but only slightly) • **The Pick:** Decisions, decisions (that we can't afford to make). Hard to resist the V10													
4.2 FSI quattro	$308,010	V8	4.2	316	430	M6	1660	4.8	–	14.4	98	53		A
4.2 FSI quattro	$315,510	V8	4.2	316	430	S7	1685	4.5	–	12.6	98	53		A
5.2 FSI quattro	$395,410	V10	5.2	386	530	S7	1745	3.8	–	13.3	98	53		A
	Q3 — First in Q to challenge X1													
	✅ Excellent 2.0-litre fours; classy cabin; surprisingly agile dynamics; amusing base model ❌ AWD variants are significantly heavier; lumpy ride; small rear doors; compact boot **The Pick:** Probably the base 110kW 1.4 turbo-petrol with its new-generation donk													
1.4 TFSI	$42,900	L4T	1.4	110	250	S6	1405	8.9	–	5.9	95	55		F
2.0 TDI quattro	$47,900	L4TD	2.0	110	340	S7	1605	9.3	–	5.2	D	56		A
2.0 TFSI Sport q'ttro	$52,300	L4T	2.0	132	320	S7	1540	7.6	–	6.7	95	56		A
2.0 TDI Sport q'ttro	$56,900	L4TD	2.0	135	380	S7	1625	7.9	–	5.4	D	56		A
RS Q3	$81,510	L5T	2.5	228	420	S7	1655	5.2	–	8.8	95	63	04/14	A

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	Q5 — Style utility vehicle													
	✅ Class and quality with SUV space and versatility; punchy sixes; a genuine all-rounder ❌ Steering feels artificial; SQ5's ride is poor; Q5 doesn't like getting its skirts wet off-road **The Pick:** There's a trend with Audis: cheapest, lightest 2.0-litre turbo petrol is the go													
2.0 TDI quattro	$62,600	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S7	1770	*9.6*	*17.1*	6.1	D	63	08/15	A
2.0 TFSI quattro	$63,210	L4T	2.0	165	350	A8	1755	*7.4*	*15.4*	7.9	95	63	04/12	A
3.0 TFSI quattro	$74,610	V6S	3.0	200	400	A8	1840	5.9	–	8.5	95	63		A
3.0 TDI quattro	$75,710	V6TD	3.0	180	580	S7	1860	6.5	–	6.4	D	63		A
SQ5	$91,700	V6TTD	3.0	230	650	S7	1920	5.1	–	6.8	D	63	07/13	A
	Q7 — Mothership QE7 finally seats seven													
	✅ Sublime ride on optional air suspension; punchy and refined diesel; elegant interior ❌ Storage up front is light-on; active safety still optional; single model range (for now) • **The Pick:** The 3.0 TDI is a great engine, though we'd tick the box for air suspension													
3.0 TDI quattro	$103,100	V6TD	3.0	200	600	A8	2060	6.5	–	5.9	D	63	10/15	A
	Bentley — 3yr/unlimited, www.bentleymotors.com													
	Continental GT — Enough grunt to go Continental drifting...													
	✅ Successfully fights 2.3-tonne heft with 700Nm of continent-shifting grunt ❌ Suspension tries desperately hard to be dynamic, but it doesn't quite win that one • **The Pick:** Arguably the lighter, almost-as-swift V8 S over the monster W12													
GT V8	$381,000	V8TT	4.0	373	660	A8	2320	4.8	–	10.5	98	63	02/13	A
GT V8 S	$405,600	V8TT	4.0	389	680	A8	2320	4.5	–	10.6	98	63		A
GT W12	$408,870	W12TT	6.0	423	700	A8	2333	4.6	–	16.5	98	63	07/11	A
GT Speed	$461,300	W12TT	6.0	467	820	A8	2320	4.2	–	14.5	98	64	09/14	A
	Continental GTC — An open display of wealth													
	✅ Pedestrian plebs can see the gorgeous cabin; top-down access to W12 decibels ❌ Doesn't quite handle like a land yacht but the Continental does drink like a sailor • **The Pick:** Less than half the cost of a Phantom Drophead? We'll take two													
GTC V8	$419,100	V8TT	4.0	373	660	A8	2485	5.0	–	10.9	98	62		A
GTC V8 S	$446,000	V8TT	4.0	389	680	A8	2485	4.7	–	10.9	98	62	10/14	A
GTC W12	$449,500	W12TT	6.0	423	700	A8	2505	4.7	–	14.9	98	63	07/12	A
GT Speed	$507,400	W12TT	6.0	460	800	A8	2495	4.4	–	14.9	98	64		A
	Flying Spur — Upper-crust urgency													
	✅ Exquisite interior; jaw-dropping style, complete with muscle-car hips; high-speed calm ❌ All that heft ahead of the front axle line hampers its chances of being a driver's car • **The Pick:** Doesn't handle like a 7 Series can, but looks and feels a million bucks													
	$378,197	V8TT	4.0	373	660	A8	2350	5.2	–	10.9	98	58		A
Mulliner	$388,715	V8TT	4.0	373	660	A8	2350	5.2	–	10.9	98	58		A
	$423,160	W12TT	6.0	460	800	A8	2400	4.6	–	14.7	98	58	07/13	A
Mulliner	$448,820	W12TT	6.0	460	800	A8	2400	4.6	–	14.7	98	59		A
	Mulsanne — Captain capitalism													
	✅ Fuses contemporary tech with old-world craftsmanship; stonking twin-turbo V8 ❌ Ride on optional 21s not quite in keeping with ultra-luxe vibe; weight and consumption **Pick:** This new-age Arnage or a Rolls-Royce Ghost? We prefer the hipster Benters													
	$662,857	V8TT	6.8	377	1020	A8	2711	5.3	–	16.9	98	54	07/10	R
	BMW — 3yr/unlimited, www.bmw.com.au													
	1 Series Hatch — The rear drive continues													
	✅ The last rear-drive hatch, and all the better for it; excellent engines and transmissions ❌ Cabin quality and space can't match Audi's A3; barely a manual transmission to be seen • **The Pick:** Punchy 125i is a good match for a Golf GTI, however the M135i is a cracker													
118i	$36,900	L4T	1.6	100	220	A8	1320	8.7	–	5.6	95	59		R
118d	$40,300	L4TD	2.0	110	320	A8	1375	8.1	–	3.8	D	59		R
120i	$41,900	L4T	1.6	130	250	A8	1320	7.2	–	5.7	95	60		R
125i	$48,900	L4T	2.0	160	310	A8	1375	6.2	–	6.5	95	61		R
M135i	$62,510	L6T	3.0	240	450	A8	1430	4.9	–	7.5	95	62		R
	2 Series — BMW rediscovers its talents													
	✅ Body control a vast improvement over 1 Series coupe; punchy engines; great handling ❌ Too much equipment is optional – LSD, 19s and big brakes aren't standard on M235i • **The Pick:** M235i howls a delicious straight-six wail, and has the grunt to match													
220i	$48,900	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1365	7.0	–	6.0	95	63	06/14	R
220d	$50,900	L4TD	2.0	135	380	A8	1390	7.1	–	4.4	D	64		R
228i	$59,900	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1405	5.7	–	6.3	95	64		R
M235i	$77,500	L6T	3.0	240	450	A8	1470	*5.0*	*13.1*	7.6	95	64	07/14	R
	2 Series Conv — A fresh breeze													
	✅ Loads prettier than the 1 Series convertible it replaces; superb drivetrains; slick roof ❌ You'll never find one with a manual gearbox; M235i's stiff ride; sizeable weight gain • **The Pick:** In this guise, it's all about selfie sticks and top-down shots so grab the 228i													
220i	$55,900	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1530	7.6	–	6.4	95	63		R
228i	$68,900	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1555	6.0	–	6.6	95	64		R
M235i	$86,500	L6T	3.0	240	450	A8	1620	5.0	–	7.9	95	64		R

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication
L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors. T= turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid
Litres
Kilowatts
Newton metres
M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C= CVT
Kilograms
0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)
0-400m acceleration, in sec s (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)
Fuel consumption in Litres/100km
Recommended octane rating
Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years
When we drove it
F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

2 Active Tourer — Mini in a muumuu

✅ One of the more athletic front-drive hatches on sale; BMW cabin quality, fit and finish
❌ Late-to-the party B-Class rival doesn't feel like a BMW; packaging feels compromised
• **The Pick:** Turbo-diesel makes the most sense, but we're yet to sample the three-pot petrol

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
218i	$44,400	L3T	1.5	100	220	A6	1360	9.2		5.2	95	58		F
218d	$47,800	L4TD	2.0	110	330	A8	1410	8.9		4.2	D	58	10/14	F
225i	$54,900	L4T	2.0	170	350	A8	1430	6.6		6.1	95	59	10/14	F

i3 — COTY-winning electric wunderkind

✅ Stunning design; instant torque delivers grunty performance; our reigning COTY winner
❌ Only seats four, with a similarly compact boot; road noise; entry price
• **The Pick:** While going full EV is commendable, the Range Extender is worth the extra coin

	$63,900	E		125	250	A1	1195	7.2				53	09/13	R
Range Extender	$69,900	L2H		125	250	A1	1315	7.9		0.6	95	53	01/15	R

3 Series — Now you can have your 3 with a triple

✅ Mid-life update brings new engines with outstanding efficiency and performance
❌ Optional 'Variable Sport' steering adds cost and confusion, without dynamic gain
• **The Pick:** 330i delivers a fine performance/value blend, but M3 brings proper thrills

318i	$54,900	L3T	1.5	100	230	A6	1475	8.9	–		95			R
320i	$61,900	L4T	2.0	135	290	A8	1505	7.2	–		95			R
320i Touring	$65,300	L4T	2.0	135	290	A8	1585	7.5	–		95			R
320d	$63,800	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1505	7.3	–		D			R
330i	$69,900	L4T	2.0	185	350	A8	1545	5.9	–		95			R
330i Touring	$73,300	L4T	2.0	185	350	A8	1615	6.0	–		95			R
340i	$89,900	L6T	3.0	240	450	A8	1605	5.2	–	6.8	96			R
ActiveHybrid 3	$100,200	L6TH	3.0	225	400	A8	1655	5.3	–	5.9	95	60		R
M3	$139,900	L6TT	3.0	317	550	M6	1520	4.3	–	8.8	98	54		R
M3	$139,900	L6TT	3.0	317	550	S7	1560	4.1	–	8.3	98	54	08/14	R

4 Series Coupe — Two-door 3 becomes 4

✅ Wide stance and adaptive dampers make 4 Series a proper driver's car – especially M4!
❌ Electric steering doesn't feel fluent in Sport mode; styling has lost some elegance
• **The Pick:** The excellent 428i is the sweet spot, but the firecracker M4 is dynamic genius

420i	$71,100	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1465	7.3	–	6.3	95	57		R
420d	$73,400	L4TD	2.0	135	380	A8	1465	7.3	–	4.6	D	57		R
428i	$82,400	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1470	*5.8*	*14.1*	6.4	95	57	05/14	R
435i	$109,900	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	1525	5.1	–	7.4	95	64	09/13	R
M4	$149,900	L6TT	3.0	317	550	M6	1497	4.3	–	8.8	98	57	11/14	R
M4	$149,900	L6TT	3.0	317	550	S7	1537	*5.0*	*13.0*	8.3	98	57	09/14	R

4 Series Gran Coupe — Yet another niche plugged

✅ Liftback practicality; slick drivetrains; frameless doors; Audi A5-smashing dynamics
❌ Neither coupe-ish enough to be cool, or elegant enough to be beautiful
• **The Pick:** At just $500 more than the two-door, a 428i Gran Coupe kinda makes sense...

420i	$71,100	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1480	7.6		6.1	95	59		R
420d	$73,400	L4TD	2.0	135	380	A8	1510	7.5		4.6	D	60		R
428i	$82,400	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1580	6.0		6.4	95	60	08/14	R
435i	$109,900	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	1575	5.2		7.6	95	59	08/14	R

4 Series Conv — Inherits coupe's dynamism

✅ Elegant rear deck enhances styling; as quiet as the coupe; velvety petrol drivetrains
❌ Much heavier than the coupe, to the detriment of performance; small rear seat
• **The Pick:** 428i has everything most people could ever need, except for the 435i's six-pot

420d	$90,700	L4TD	2.0	135	380	A8	1690	8.2		4.8	D	57		R
428i	$99,400	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1700	6.4		6.7	95	57		R
435i	$128,000	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	1750	5.5		7.7	95	64	03/14	R
M4 Convertible	$161,900	L6TT	3.0	317	550	M6	1750	4.6	–	9.1	98	57		R
M4 Convertible	$161,900	L6TT	3.0	317	550	S7	1790	4.4	–	8.7	98	57	11/14	R

3 Series GT — The 3 crosses over

✅ Riding on a 3 Series platform, but with a higher driving position and a stack more space
❌ It's not what you'd call classically good looking, though at least it isn't an SUV
• **The Pick:** The top-spec 328i – it's much faster, yet barely any thirstier than the 320i

320i	$68,100	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	–	7.9	–	6.2	95	60		R
320d	$70,400	L4TD	2.0	135	380	A8	–	7.9	–	4.9	D	60		R
328i	$76,800	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	–	6.1	–	6.5	95	59	09/13	R

Z4 — Now with added maturity

✅ Looks good in the metal; folding hard-top offers security; keen standard chassis
❌ A Boxster is comprehensively better than the top models, which are heavy and ride firmly
• **The Pick:** Base turbo petrol with small wheels – the most pure and best-value Z4

sDrive20i	$80,500	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1395	6.9	–	6.8	95	55		R
sDrive28i	$90,500	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1400	5.5	–	6.8	95	55	02/12	R
sDrive35i	$119,700	L6TT	3.0	250	450	S7	1525	*5.4*	*13.6*	9.0	95	64	10/12	R

5 Series — Not the leader it once was

✅ Excellent drivetrains; nicely finished cabin; M5's borderline-scary performance
❌ Standard suspension offers a startling lack of composure; M5 too heavy and uninvolving
• **The Pick:** 528i a slick all-rounder; 550i is a jet, but not worth the extra over 535i/535d

520i	$82,300	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1610	8.0	–	6.7	95	47		R
520d	$84,800	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1625	8.1	–	5.2	D	52		R
520d Touring	$93,300	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1715	8.3	–	5.3	D	52		R
528i	$9,200	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1620	*7.3*	*15.4*	6.5	95	47	08/12	R
535i	$117,900	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	1700	*6.1*	*14.3*	7.6	95	52	08/10	R
535i Touring	$123,900	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	1770	5.9	–	7.9	98	52		R
ActiveHybrid 5	$121,700	L6TH	3.0	210	450	A8	1925	5.9	–	6.4	98	52	11/12	R
535d	$123,700	L6TTD	3.0	230	630	A8	1725	5.5	–	6.1	D	52	05/11	R
550i	$159,900	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	1830	4.6	–	–	95	52		R
M5 Pure	$185,000	V8TT	4.4	412	680	S7	1870	4.3	–	–	95			R

5 Series GT — Badged 5, based on 7

✅ Typically outstanding BMW drivetrains; spacious, flexible and comfortable interior
❌ Love it or hate it styling; feels big and cumbersome around town
• **The Pick:** 535i offers Club Class rear legroom for $1K over sedan, but doesn't drive as well

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
520d	$96,500	L4TD	2.0	135	380	A8	1875	8.9	–	5.3	D	52		R
530d	$111,500	L6TD	3.0	190	560	A8	1940	6.2	–	5.8	D	52		R
535i	$119,500	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	1940	6.3	–	8.2	95	52		R

6 Series Coupe — Swings with drivers

✅ 640i boasts one of the world's greatest six-cylinder engines; improved styling
❌ Not a car for driving enthusiasts, but the bigger boot will fit more drivers
• **The Pick:** Turbo-six is so good it renders the twin-turbo V8 almost irrelevant

640i	$177,900	L6T	3.0	235	450	A8	1685	5.3	–	7.4	95	49		R
650i	$231,900	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	1795	4.6	–	8.6	95	49		R
M6	$292,600	V8TT	4.4	441	700	S7	1850	3.9	–	9.9	98	50		R

6 Series Conv — Six in drop-top form

✅ Shark-nosed presence, plush cabin, and superb engines to blow your toupee off
❌ Dull dynamics will disappoint drivers; zero rear legroom will disappoint passengers
• **The Pick:** More noise in upgraded V8, but peachy six now the default pick

640i	$193,900	L6T	3.0	235	450	A8	1820	5.5	–	7.6	98	49		R
650i	$247,900	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	1930	4.6	–	8.9	98	49		R
M6	$308,600	V8TT	4.4	441	700	S7	1980	4.0	–	10.3	95	48		R

6 Series Gran Coupe — Six plus two doors

✅ Sexier than a 5 Series; better to drive than a 7 Series; can fit five (at a pinch)
❌ Still not as dynamic as a BMW should be; poorly packaged rear seat
• **The Pick:** The six is lovely, but huge premium over a 535i makes it questionable value

640i	$184,900	L6T	3.0	235	450	A8	1750	5.4	–	7.5	98	49		R
640d	$184,900	L6TTD	3.0	230	630	A8	1810	5.4	–	5.4	D	49		R
650i	$238,900	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	1865	4.6	–	8.6	98	49		R
M6	$299,600	V8TT	4.4	412	680	A8	1875	4.0	–	9.9	98	46		R

7 Series — All-new 7 is a stunner

✅ Interior space and quality; powerful and economical engines; driving dynamics; ride
❌ Semi-autonomous steering is flawed; high prices now higher; gimmicky gesture tech
• **The Pick:** 730d makes plenty of sense for its smooth, torquey diesel and lowest price

730d	$217,500	L6TD	3.0	195	620	A8	–	6.1	–	4.7	D			R
740i	$224,200	L6TT	3.0	240	450	A8	–	5.5	–	7.0	95			R
740Li	$238,000	L6TT	3.0	240	450	A8	–	5.6	–	7.0	95			R
750i	$289,600	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	–	4.7	–	8.1	95			R
750Li	$312,700	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	–	4.7	–	8.3	95			R
ActiveHybrid 7	$223,100	L6TT	3.0	235	450	A8	1970	5.7	–	6.8	95	38		R
ActiveHybrid 7L	$238,100	L6TT	3.0	235	450	A8	1995	5.7	–	6.8	95	38		R

i8 — Hybrid performance hero

✅ Head-turning styling; scissor doors; throaty three-cylinder sound; potent performance
❌ Twice the price of an M4; undignified entry and egress; purists will shit-can the three-pot
• **The Pick:** If you're in IT, is there any other choice?

	$299,000	L3TH	1.5	266	570	A6	1485	4.4	–	2.1	95	36	11/14	A

X1 — Space, style and sports ... shaken

✅ Aussie styling DNA; terrific engines; interior space and quality; keen handling
❌ Flat standard seats; agitated and uncomfortable ride; steering kickback on bad roads
• **The Pick:** If you value ride quality, please option adaptive dampers. Or buy something else

sDrive 18d	$49,500	L4TD	2.0	105	320	A8	1495	9.2	–	4.3	D			F
sDrive 20i	$51,600	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1510	7.7	–	5.9	95			F
xDrive 20d	$56,500	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1575	7.6	–	4.9	D			A
xDrive 25i	$59,900	L4T	2.0	170	350	A8	1595	6.5	–	6.6	95			A

X3 — Exorcises the sins of the original

✅ Superb optional vario-ratio steering and sharp dynamics; 28i and 30d are fast, yet thrifty
❌ Styling as bland as the standard cabin is basic; milkshake ride with standard dampers
• **The Pick:** The 30d torque-monster. Or, more likely, a Discovery Sport or Audi Q5

xDrive 20i	$62,200	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1720	*8.5*	*16.2*	7.5	95	61	08/15	A
xDrive 20d	$65,800	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1725	8.1	–	5.2	D	61		A
xDrive 28i	$74,600	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1740	6.7	–	7.5	95	61		A
xDrive 30d	$79.100	L6TD	3.0	190	560	A8	1800	6.2	–	6.0	D	61		A

X4 — X6's prettier baby sister

✅ Less bulk than chunky X6 makes X4 a more socially acceptable coupe-SUV thingy
❌ Deserves the 180kW turbo-four; cheaper X3 more practical; 4 Series coupe is sexier
• **The Pick:** Probably the 30d, seeing it weighs the same as the 35i but is much more frugal

xDrive20i	$71,100	L4T	2.0	135	270	A8	1735	8.1	–	7.2	95	61		A
xDrive20d	$74,900	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1745	8.0	–	5.2	D	61		A
xDrive30d	$84,200	L6TD	3.0	190	560	S8	1820	5.8	–	5.9	D	61		A
xDrive35i	$89,300	L6T	3.0	225	400	S8	1815	5.5	–	8.3	95	61	09/14	A
xDrive35d	$89.900	L6TD	3.0	230	630	A8	–	5.2	–	6.0	D			A

X5 — Mum's SUV goes large

✅ Huge cabin with room for seven; excellent drivetrains and handling; mega M50d
❌ Clearly styled for Americans; dead steering; third row seats unconvincing; feels heavy
• **The Pick:** That'll be the xDrive30d with its smoother, punchier, more economical diesel six

sDrive 25d	$86,200	L4TD	2.0	168	450	A8	1995	8.2	–	5.8	D	63	06/14	R
xDrive 25d	$91,200	L4TD	2.0	168	450	A8	2040	8.2	–	6	D	63		A
xDrive 30d	$102,900	L6TD	3.0	190	560	A8	2070	*6.5*	*14.7*	6.2	D	63	01/15	A
xDrive 35i	$109,900	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8	2030	6.5	–	8.5	95	63		A
xDrive 40d	$118,900	L6TD	3.0	230	630	A8	2110	5.9	–	6.2	D	63		A
xDrive 50i	$135,900	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	2175	5.0	–	10.5	95	61		A
M50d	$149,900	L6TTTD	3.0	280	740	A8	2190	5.3	–	6.7	D	58		A
M	$185,510	V8TT	4.4	423	750	A8	2275	4.2	–	11.1	95	56	06/15	A

X6 — Decently executed, shame about the idea

✅ Staggering on-road ability; muscular engines; slightly less repulsive than the old one
❌ Big, heavy and dubious in concept; agitated ride of M50d; hideous steering
• **The Pick:** If you really have to, the beaut-sounding 50i with an M Performance bodykit

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
xDrive 30d	$117,500	L6TD	3.0	190	560	A8	2065	6.7	–	6.0	D	61		A
xDrive 35i	$122,900	L6T	3.0	225	400	A8		6.4	–	8.6	95	63		A
xDrive 40d	$130,500	L6TD	3.0	230	630	A8		5.8	–	6.3	D	63		A
xDrive 50i	$152,500	V8TT	4.4	330	650	A8	2170	4.8	–	9.7	98	56		A
M50d	$159,500	L6TTD	3.0	280	740	A8	2185	5.2	–	6.6	D	56		A
M	$194,310	V8TT	4.4	423	750	A8	2265	4.2	–	11.1	95	56	06/15	A

Caterham

2yr/50,000km
www.caterhamcars.com.au

Seven — The thrill of simplicity

✅ Ridiculously fast and fun; unassisted steering a joy at speed; smokes GT3s at track days
❌ Quality and reliability doubts; unforgiving ride; no ABS; heavy steering; tight cabin
• **The Pick:** CSR175 is Oz's quickest new 'car' under $100K. If it's not raining, that is

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Seven 275	$68,990	L4	1.6	100	160	M5	590	–	–	6.2	95	56		R
CSR 175	$91,990	L4	2.0	127	177	M6	625	5.0	–	7.7	95	64	07/15	R
Seven 485	$116,990	L4	2.0	127	206	M6	600	3.9	–	7.7	95	64		R

Chery

3yr/100,000km
www.cherymotors.com.au

J3 — Not a quality choice

✅ A surprisingly decent-looking small hatch for light-hatch money; six airbags standard
❌ Frankly, the J3 is not cheap enough given its poor build quality and thirsty engine
• **The Pick:** None. A Honda Jazz is roomier, identically priced and leagues better

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$14,990*	L4	1.6	93	160	M5	1350			8.3	91	40		F
	$16,990*	L4	1.6	93	160	C	1350			8.7	91	46		F

Prickly stuff

CITROEN'S quirky C4 Cactus has bounded into the bulging small-SUV market, screaming individuality.

The C4-based SUV has modest market hopes, though its mix of jellybean shapes, bold wheelarches and striking options, including coloured 'Airbumps', whacky exterior colours (with contrasting mirrors and roof rails) and interior trims, mean the Cactus can't fail to stand out. Citroen says there are 23,184 possible styling combinations, not all of which are tasteful.

Both Cactii feature a 7.0-inch touchscreen, rear-view camera, digital radio, auto wipers, tyre pressure monitors and 17-inch alloys. But a proper automatic gearbox is notably absent...

J11 — Mid-sized SUV for small-hatch money

✅ Metal for money equation; drive-away pricing; looks a bit like an old Toyota RAV4
❌ Looks a bit like an old Toyota RAV4; performs like 4WDs from 20 years ago
• **The Pick:** Bzzzt, again. Smart money buys a second-hand Subaru Forester or Outback

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$19,990*	L4	1.6	93	160	M5	1343	–	–	7.4	91	34		F
	$21,990*	L4	1.6	93	160	C	1375	–	–	8.6	91	36		F

Chrysler

3yr/100,000km
www.chrysler.com.au

300 — Bold Yank with extra bling

✅ Styling presence; tight chassis; slick instruments; cranking sound system; SRT's grunt
❌ Firm ride on 20s without adaptive dampers; interior not cohesive; 300C deserves a V8
• **The Pick:** Costly as it is, the range-topping SRT with adaptive dampers is the best 300

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
C	$49,000	V6	3.6	210	340	A8	1838	–	–	9.4	91	40		R
C Luxury	$54,000	V6	3.6	210	340	A8	1862	–	–	9.7	91	40		R
SRT Core	$59,000	V8	6.4	350	637	A8	1946	–	–	13.0	98	40		R
SRT	$69,000	V8	6.4	350	637	A8	1965	–	–	13.0	98	44		R

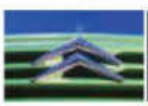
Grand Voyager — A big box that moves

✅ All you'll probably ever want in an MPV: seven-seat space, practical features and torque
❌ Average dynamics; bland image; sluggish performance; doesn't feel like $58-78K worth
• **The Pick:** Fake your disappearance before surfacing in Spain as a farmhand called Pancho

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
2.8 CRD LX	$57,500	L4TD	2.8	120	360	A6	2100	12.8	–	8.4	D	51		F
2.8 CRD Limited	$77,500	L4TD	2.8	120	360	A6	2100	12.8	–	8.4	D	54		F

Citroën

6yr/unlimited
www.citroën.com.au



DS3 — Citroën finds form

✅ Brilliantly anti-retro styling; peppy turbo four; excellent handling; impressive ride quality
❌ Recent price rise, although it does get more gear; road noise; 1.2 turbo auto not here yet
• **The Pick:** DSport is the only choice, but why not a hot DS3 with the Pug 208 GTI's engine?

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
DSport	$33,990	L4T	1.6	121	240	M6	1140	7.5	–	5.6	95	50	06/15	F

DS3 Cabriolet — Rooflessly French

✅ Fold-back roof retains the DS3's cool lines and retracts at up to 120km/h
❌ When folded back the roof blocks the driver's rear vision
• **The Pick:** Unless you're utterly obsessed with seeing sky, stick with the DSport hatch

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
DSport	$36,590	L4T	1.6	121	240	M6		–	–	5.6	95	51	06/15	F

C4 — French vanilla

✅ Perky three-pot turbo; elegant and well-equipped interior; decent ride and handling
❌ No manual gearbox; bland hatchback shape; we'd prefer a Pug 308 or Golf for this money
• **The Pick:** Freshened C4 is appealing, particularly the prissy Exclusive, but a 308 is better

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Seduction	$29,990	L3T	1.2	96	230	A6	1240	10.9	–	4.9	95	42		F
Exclusive	$33,990	L3T	1.2	96	230	A6	1240	10.9	–	5.1	95	42	10/15	F

DS4 — Raised to be a hot-hatch

✅ Lifts C4's presence and ride height; turbo-petrol fours are strong engines
❌ Steering and handling aren't to DS3 (or Golf) standards; awaiting a much-needed facelift
• **The Pick:** The DSport. Or for the sensible, a VW Golf GTI

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
DStyle	$34,990	L4T	1.6	120	240	A6	1284	8.6	–	7.7	95	52		F
DStyle HDi	$37,990	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	1300	12.4	17.8	5.7	D	52		F
DSport	$37,490	L4T	1.6	120	240	A6				7.7	95	52		F
DSport	$39,490	L4T	1.6	147	275	M6	1316	8.5	15.8	6.4	95	52	10/12	F
DSport HDi	$40,490	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	–	–	–	5.7	D	52		F

C5 — Not as impressive as it looks

✅ Looks terrific; stylish cabin; superb wafting comfort on smooth roads
❌ Doesn't cope well with sharp-edged imperfections at low speed; odd electric steering
• **The Pick:** Cheaper pricing means C5 now rivals top-spec Japanese mid-sizers

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Exclusive	$46,690	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	1658	10.0	–	7.1	D	46		F
Exclusive Tourer wgn	$48,690	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	1695	10.2	–	7.1	D	46		F

DS 5 — French eccentricity returns!

✅ Design nous; uniqueness and ability to stand out; cabin quality and attention to detail
❌ Average handling, including pitching on acceleration; poor ride; relatively high price
• **The Pick:** Excellent interior let down by sub-standard ride, which is galling in a Citroen

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
DSport	$56,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A6	1540	9.2	–	4.5	D			F

C4 Cactus — French fun, warts and all

✅ Drive-away pricing; distinctive design; customisable exterior components; lots of gear
❌ Odd drivetrain combinations – manual-only petrol and semi-auto diesel
• **The Pick:** Zingy three-pot turbo promises simple pleasures, in a 2CV-like fashion

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Exclusive	$26,990	L3T	1.2	81	205	M5	1020	9.3	–	4.3	95			F
Exclusive	$29,990	L4TD	1.6	68	230	S6	1085	11.2	–	3.4	D			F

C4 Picasso — Part hatch, part SUV, MPV genes

✅ Quirky style; functional and elegant interior; impressive fuel efficiency; fine dynamics
❌ Fairly pricey for what is effectively a spacious hatchback; will people get it?
• **The Pick:** See below if you want a kid carrier, though this five-seater has Tardis-like room

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$40,990	L4T	1.6	121	240	A6	1310	9.3	–	5.6	95	59	04/15	F

Grand C4 Picasso — Pregnant supermodel

✅ Head-turning style; space-age cabin; cracker diesel; sharp dynamics; six-year warranty
❌ Essentially a five-plus two – back row only for adults under 180cm; seven-up boot space
• **The Pick:** This stunning new-generation Citroen MPV over any of the turgid alternatives

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$44,990	L4TD	2.0	110	370	A6	1440	*9.6*	*16.9*	4.5	D	50	07/15	F

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T= turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C= CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in sec s (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

Dodge

3yr/100,000km
www.dodge.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Journey	Cross-bred MPV/SUV													
	✓ Cabin offers seven seats, lots of clever storage; punchy, throaty new Pentastar V6 ✗ Poor quality of cabin plastics and finish; non-existent dynamics • **The Pick:** Attractive on-paper; much less so on the road. Buy a Kia Sorento													
SXT	$33,500	V6	3.6	206	342	A6	1942	–	–	10.4	91	52		F
R/T	$37,500	V6	3.6	206	342	A6	1942	–	–	10.4	91	56		F

Ferrari

3yr/unlimited
www.ferrariworld.com

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
California T	Turbo charger													
	✓ More exciting, more engaging, more Ferrari; modern Ferrari turbo is a ripper ✗ Roofless cruising carries a weight penalty; not as sharp as other Ferraris • **The Pick:** One model fits all, and it now delivers what a Ferrari GT should													
	$409,888	V8T	3.9	415	755	S7	1730	3.6	–	13.1	98	66	08/14	R
488 GTB	Join an enormous queue													
	✓ Staggering acceleration; mountains of torque; brilliant roadholding and handling ✗ You'll be waiting years to get one; new turbo V8 doesn't quite sound like a Ferrari should • **The Pick:** Toss a coin between this and a McLaren. Heads buys the Ferrari													
	$469,888	V8	3.9	492	760	S7	1475	3.0	–	11.4	98			R
488 Spider	Drop-top motoring at its fastest													
	✓ Stellar performance and handling; supple ride; standout design; coupe/cabrio versatility ✗ Sports seats very firm; slight vibration through steering; less theatre than atmo V8 • **The Pick:** Hard top or drop top – it doesn't matter – but getting hold of one is a challenge													
	$526,888	V8	3.9	492	760	S7	1525	3.0	–	11.4	98			R
FF	All-four for all seasons													
	✓ 612 replacement offers a superb combination of speed, balance and comfort ✗ A face only a Hyundai designer could love; tail-out heroics toned down • **The Pick:** Drivers will pick this smaller four-seat GT over a same-price Mulsanne or Ghost													
	$625,000	V12	6.3	486	683	S7	1880	3.7	–	15.4	95	53	06/11	A
F12	It's Robbo's favourite car													
	✓ New-age Ferrari flagship integrates tech and old-school emotion, with free servicing! ✗ We're being picky but the steering wheel is too fussy; Ferrari isn't doing long-term loans • **The Pick:** F12 trounced Lamborghini's Aventador in our exclusive comparo													
Berlinetta	$690,745	V12	6.3	545	690	S7	1630	3.1	–	14.9	95	45	12/14	R
tdf	$808,888	V12	6.3	574	705	S7	–	3.1	–	15.4	95			R

Fiat

3yr/100,000km
www.fiat.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
500	Evergreen 500 still a cutey													
	✓ Updated with new TFT screen; all non-Abarth prices are drive-away; S model's verve ✗ Awkward driving position; 'Dualogic' robotised 'box is appalling, cabin lacks storage • **The Pick:** Feisty 500 S six-speed manual for its combination of sports and comfort													
Pop	$17,000*	L4	1.2	51	102	M5	905	*14.1*	*19.2*	5.1	95	58	06/15	F
Pop	$18,500*	L4	1.2	51	102	S5	940	12.9	–	5.0	95	54		F
S	$20,000*	L4	1.4	74	131	M6	970	10.5	–	6.1	95	54	10/14	F
S	$21,500*	L4	1.4	74	131	S5	980	10.5	–	5.8	95	56		F
Lounge	$23,000*	L2T	0.9	63	145	S5	980	11.0	–	3.9	98	58		F
Abarth Turismo	$34,000	L4T	1.4	118	230	M5	1035	7.4	–	5.4	98	50		F
Abarth Turismo	$34,000	L4T	1.4	118	230	S5	1070	7.6	–	5.3	98	48		F
Abarth Competizione	$37,000	L4T	1.4	118	230	M5	1035	7.4	–	5.4	98	50	10/14	F
Abarth Competizione	$39,500	L4T	1.4	118	230	S5	1070	7.6	–	5.3	98	61		F
Abarth Biposto 695	$65,000	L4T	1.4	140	250	M5	997	5.9	–	6.5	98			F
500 C	The lid peels off this one													
	✓ Essentially a 500 with a massive (easy to use) sunroof, but well-priced for a cabriolet ✗ Paying nearly $4000 to put the 500's roof down, and the body flex when you do • **The Pick:** The new Sport model, which is now cheaper than the base Cabrio used to be													
Pop	$21,000	L4	1.2	51	102	S6	945	12.9	–	5.0	95	54		F
S	$24,000	L4	1.4	74	131	S5	1010	10.5	–	5.8	95	54		F
Lounge	$25,500	L2T	0.9	63	145	S5	970	11.0	–	3.9	98	56		F
Abarth Compet.	$39,000	L4T	1.4	118	230	M5	1085	7.4	–	5.4	98	50		F
Abarth Compet.	$41,000	L4T	1.4	118	230	S5	1085	7.6	–	5.3	98	61		F
Panda	An Italian favourite													
	✓ Interesting and individual design; fun to drive; perky 1.2 Fire and charming 1.3 diesel ✗ Too expensive for what it is; choppy ride; frustrating Dualogic gearbox; Twin Air's vibes • **The Pick:** At $16,500 driveaway, the base Pop has its appeal. But we like the Trekking too													
Pop	$16,500	L4	1.2	51	102	M5	950	14.2	–	5.2	91	55		F
Easy	$19,000	L2T	0.9	63	145	M5	985	11.2	–	4.2	95	54	12/13	F
Easy	$20,500	L2T	0.9	63	145	S5	985	11.5	–	4.1	95	54		F
Lounge	$22,500	L2T	0.9	63	145	S5	990	11.5	–	4.1	95	54		F
Trekking	$24,000	L4TD	1.3	55	190	M5	1040	13.2	–	4.2	D	54		F

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Punto	Old, but has its charm													
	✓ Comfortable, roomy, torquey, economical, customisable; Pop manual is a fine city car ✗ Crappo Dualogic 'box; base Pop gets old Punto dash; where's the 99kW 1.4 Multiair? • **The Pick:** Pop manual is a likeable, old-school, pizza-delivery kind of city runabout													
Pop	$15,900	L4	1.4	57	115	M5	1024	13.2	–	5.7	91	49	12/13	F
Pop	$17,400	L4	1.4	57	115	S5	1039	13.2	–	5.4	91	47		F
Easy	$19,300	L4	1.4	57	115	S5	1050	13.2	–	5.4	91	47		F
Lounge	$21,800	L4	1.4	57	115	S5	1050	13.2	–	5.4	91	45		F
500X	Fashionable charge													
	✓ Stylish exterior; quality interior; fluid dynamics; decent level of optional safety tech ✗ Stiff-legged ride; absent-minded nine-speed auto; all that style doesn't come cheap • **The Pick:** Mid-level Pop Star treads a good middle ground, although still at a premium													
Pop	$28,000	L4T	1.4	103	230	M6	1295		–	6.0	91			F
Pop	$30,000	L4T	1.4	103	230	S6	1295		–	5.7	91			F
Pop Star	$33,000	L4T	1.4	103	230	S6	1295		–	5.7	91			F
Lounge	$38,000	L4T	1.4	125	250	A9	1405		–	6.7	95			A
Cross Plus	$39,000	L4T	1.4	125	250	A9	1405		–	6.7	95			A
Freemont	Fiat's Dodge in drag													
	✓ Chrysler know-how means parent company Fiat gets to have its own MPV/SUV ✗ Brilliant value, but needs to be considering its Dodge Journey DNA • **The Pick:** The base-model Freemont with its standard features is great value for money													
	$28,000	L4	2.4	125	220	A6	1874	–	–	9.8	91	51		F
Urban	$30,000	L4	2.4	125	220	A6	1874	–	–	9.8	91	54		F
Lounge	$33,000	L4	2.4	125	220	A6	1874	–	–	9.8	91	56		F
Urban	$33,000	L4TD	2.0	125	350	M6	1874	11.0	–	6.3	D	55		F
Crossroad	$37,500	V6	3.6	206	342	A6	1820	–	–	10.4	91	54		F

Ford

3yr/100,000km
www.ford.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Fiesta	The driver's light hatch													
	✓ Superb handling – especially ST; great steering; new dual-clutch is a gem; ST is a legend ✗ Lacks the space and versatility of Jazz, and the cabin class of just about every rival • **The Pick:** Rorty-sounding, brilliant-handling ST is sensational – both for ability and value													
Ambiente	$15,825	L4	1.5	82	140	M5	–	–	–	5.8	91	48		F

TOP 5 Oldest cars still on sale

1 LAND ROVER DEFENDER 1948 OK, the latest Defender gets a modern engine, but the basics of the soon-to-be-discontinued model kicked off after WWII with the original Land Rover. Immense off-road ability remains its USP.

2 MORGAN PLUS 4 1950 Others in the low-volume Morgan range could fill this list, but the Plus 4 is the oldest, stretching back 66 years. The original Vanguard engine has made way for a modern Ford four-pot.

3 MERCEDES-BENZ G-WAGEN 1979 It's the only Merc without a scheduled end date. And no wonder – each year sales of the boxy off-roader keep getting better, and Benz wants to build it as long as it can.

4 TOYOTA L'CRUISER 70-SERIES 1984 Toyota's answer to the Defender is a hit in the Aussie bush – mainly because it's unkillable. Gets a grunty single-turbo version of the 4.5-litre turbo-diesel V8, but rough and rugged elsewhere.

5 LOTUS ELISE 1996 The Elise being produced these days is slicker looking than the original that was hand-finished in England 20 years ago. But it's essentially the same old girl underneath, albeit with more reliable engines.

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Ambiente	$17,825	L4	1.5	82	140	S6	–	–	–	5.8	91	48		F
Trend	$17,825	L4	1.5	82	140	M5	–	–	–	5.8	91	50		F
Trend	$19,790	L4	1.5	82	140	S6	1128	*11.3*	*18.1*	5.8	91	48	03/15	F
Sport	$20,525	L3T	1.0	92	170	M5	1127	*10.3*	*17.3*	4.9	91	50	07/14	F
Sport	$22,525	L3T	1.0	92	170	S6	–	–	–	5.3	91	50		F
ST	$25,990	L4T	1.6	134	240	M6	1197	*7.0*	*14.9*	6.2	95	45	02/14	F
	Focus						Extra class, more character							
	☑ Inherent driver appeal; vastly improved cabin; ride quality of Trend and Sport; equipment ☒ New 1.5 Ecoboost lacks efficiency when pushed; firm ride on 18s; expensive entry ticket • **The Pick:** Sport with grippier tyres and extra equipment, manual or auto													
Trend hatch	$23,390	L4T	1.5	132	240	M6		–	–	5.8	95			F
Trend hatch	$24,390	L4T	1.5	132	240	A6		–	–	6.2	95			F
Trend sedan	$24,390	L4T	1.5	132	240	A6		–	–	6.2	95			F
Sport hatch	$26,490	L4T	1.5	132	240	M6		–	–	5.8	95			F
Sport hatch	$28,190	L4T	1.5	132	240	A6	1380	*8.8*	*16.4*	6.2	95		12/15	F
Titanium hatch	$32,690	L4T	1.5	132	240	A6		–	–	6.4	95			F
Titanium sedan	$32,690	L4T	1.5	132	240	A6		–	–	6.2	95			F
ST	$38,990	L4T	2.0	184	360	M6		–	–	7.3	98	51	07/15	F
	Mondeo						Dynamic and comfort benchmark							
	☑ Superb chassis; vast and quiet interior; plush seats; sweet petrols; diesel frugality; value ☒ Top-spec Titanium interior not special enough; cabin plastics below VW levels; weight • **The Pick:** Mid-level Trend delivers easily the finest combination of dynamism and comfort													
Ambiente hatch	$33,190	L4	2.0	149	345	A6	1605	–	–	8.2	95	47	06/15	F
Ambiente wagon	$35,040	L4	2.0	149	345	A6	1649	–	–	8.5	95	47		F
Ambiente TDCi hatch	$37,190	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1659	8.6	–	5.1	D	48		F
Ambiente TDCi wag	$39,040	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1703	8.7	–	5.3	D	48	06/15	F
Trend hatch	$37,290	L4T	2.0	177	345	A6	1629	7.9	–	8.2	95	48	06/15	F
Trend TDCi hatch	$40,490	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1683	8.6	–	5.1	D	48		F
Trend TDCi wagon	$42,340	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1713	8.7	–	5.3	D	50		F
Titanium hatch	$44,290	L4T	2.0	177	345	A6	1690	7.9	–	8.5	95	49		F
Titanium TDCi hatch	$47,490	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1744	8.6	–	5.1	D	50		F
Titanium TDCi wgn	$49,340	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1782	*9.1*	*16.6*	5.3	D	50	07/15	F
	Falcon						New threads and tech for ageing sedan							
	☑ Polished ride and handling; quick turbo six; punchy turbo four; standard sat-nav ☒ Dated cabin; compromised driving position; new XR8's very firm ride • **The Pick:** Regular XR6 has long been the best Falcon, though possibly a G6E Ecoboost													
	$36,400	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	1710	–	–	9.0	91	27		R
Ecoboost	$36,400	L4T	2.0	179	353	A6	1648	*6.5*	*14.5*	8.0	91	33		R
EcoLPi	$38,900	L6	4.0	198	409	A6	1757	–	–	11.7	L	36		R
G6E	$40,110	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	1756	*7.3*	*15.3*	9.5	91	40		R
G6E Ecoboost	$40,110	L4T	2.0	179	353	A6	1706	*6.8*	*14.8*	8.7	91	37	02/15	R
G6E EcoLPi	$42,610	L6	4.0	198	409	A6	1798	–	–	12.6	L	40		R
G6E Turbo	$47,050	L6T	4.0	270	533	A6	1789	*5.1*	*13.3*	11.7	95	42		R
XR6	$36,090	L6	4.0	195	391	M6	1728	–	–	11.1	91	36		R
XR6	$38,290	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	1749	*7.2*	*15.2*	9.5	91	36		R
XR6 EcoLPi	$40,790	L6	4.0	198	409	A6	1780	–	–	12.6	L	37		R
XR6 Turbo	$43,490	L6T	4.0	270	533	M6	1769	–	–	12.0	95	42		R
XR6 Turbo	$45,690	L6T	4.0	270	533	A6	1779	*5.2*	*13.4*	11.7	95	42		R
XR8	$53,490	V8S	5.0	335	570	M6	1858	–	–	13.6	95	43		R
XR8	$55,690	V8S	5.0	335	570	A6	1861	*5.2*	*13.3*	13.7	95	43	01/15	R
	Falcon ute						Falcon gets uted, for the last time							
	☑ Same front end as sedan means accurate steering and decent turn-in; muscular engines ☒ Leaf-sprung rear end lacks grip on broken surfaces, compromises chassis balance • **The Pick:** Base model is a fine workhorse. Turbo six can overpower the chassis													
	$29,790	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	1611	–	–	–	91	42		R
EcoLPI	$32,290	L6	4.0	198	409	A6	1678	–	–	–	L	43		R
XR6	$32,640	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	1611	–	–	–	91	53		R
XR6 EcoLPI	$35,140	L6	4.0	198	409	A6	1672	–	–	–	L	53		R
XR6 Turbo	$39,810	L6T	4.0	270	533	A6	1816	*5.5*	*13.6*	–	95	51	07/11	R
	EcoSport						Fiesta in a leotard							
	☑ Brilliant 1.0-litre turbo triple; impressive steering and handling; compact size; Fiesta DNA ☒ Low-grade interior plastics; ugly spare wheel placement; gutless 1.5-litre; average tyres • **The Pick:** The 1.0-litre manual – smooth, characterful and effortless ... unlike the atmo 1.5													
Ambiente	$20,790	L4	1.5	82	140	M5	1242	13.3	–	6.5	95	46		F
Ambiente	$22,790	L4	1.5	82	140	S6	1267	14.1	–	6.5	95	46		F
Trend	$22,290	L3	1.0	92	170	M5	1275	12.7	–	5.7	95	46		F
Trend	$24,290	L4	1.5	82	140	S6	1276	14.1	–	6.5	95	47		F
Titanium	$25,790	L3	1.0	92	170	M5	1280	*12.9*	*18.5*	5.7	95	46	01/14	F
Titanium	$27,790	L4	1.5	82	140	S6	1289	14.1	–	6.5	95	46	02/14	F
	Mustang						America's 'Pony car' muscles in							
	☑ Responsive and characterful atmo V8; rear-end purchase; retro-modern styling; price ☒ Feels heavy, especially on direction changes; mismatched interior; convertible shake • **The Pick:** The GT Coupe by a mile. EcoBoost is punchy but the V8 amps it up with noise													
I4 Fastback	$44,990	L4T	2.3	233	432	M6	1629			8.5	91			R
I4 Fastback	$47,490	L4T	2.3	233	432	A6	1627			9.3	91			R
I4 Convertible	$53,990	L4T	2.3	233	432	A6	1685			9.4	91			R
GT Fastback	$54,990	V8T	5.0	306	530	M6	1701			13.1	98			R
GT Fastback	$57,490	V8T	5.0	306	530	A6	1709			12.6	98			R
GT Convertible	$63,990	V8T	5.0	306	520	A6	1773			12.7	98			R

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	Kuga						Fresh engines bring renewed zing							
	☑ Upholds Ford's great reputation for handling and steering; room; presence; value ☒ No manual on AWD versions; average rear seat; not as frugal as some rivals • **The Pick:** New 2.0 turbo petrol is a winner and makes it one of the better performing SUVs													
Ambiente FWD	$27,490	L4T	1.5	110	240	M6	1558	–	–	6.3	95	51		F
Ambiente FWD	$28,990	L4T	1.5	134	240	A6	1595	–	–	7.2	95	51		F
Ambiente AWD	$31,490	L4T	1.5	134	240	A6	1667	–	–	7.4	95	51		A
Trend	$36,490	L4T	2.0	178	345	A6	1700	–	–	8.8	95	52		A
Trend	$38,490	L4TD	2.0	132	400	S6	1749	–	–	5.5	D	52		A
Titanium	$44,990	L4T	2.0	178	345	A6	1732	*7.4*	*15.2*	8.8	95	54	11/15	A
Titanium	$47,990	L4TD	2.0	134	400	S6	1782	–	–	5.6	D	54		A
	Everest						Ranger-based SUV chases Prado							
	☑ On- and off-road ride and comfort; cabin refinement; clever use of tech ☒ No steering reach adjustment; centre seat headroom; separate-chassis antiquity • **The Pick:** Titanium too exxy and Ambiente skinnily equipped, so best stick with the Trend													
Ambiente	$54,990	L5TD	3.2	143	470	A6	2370	–	–	8.5	D	59		A
Trend	$60,990	L5TD	3.2	143	470	A6	2407	–	–	8.5	D	59		A
Titanium	$76,990	L5TD	3.2	143	470	A6	2495	–	–	8.5	D	60	09/15	A
	Territory						Great design is timeless							
	☑ Diesel economy; petrol punch; slick Titanium variant makes the most of its fresh styling ☒ TDV6 is an old engine; electric steering lacks feel; hard, unappealing cabin plastics • **The Pick:** Pragmatic TX is a family-car bargain, but suave Titanium is the most alluring													
TX RWD	$37,490	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	1967	–	–	10.2	91	51	06/11	R
TX RWD TDCi	$40,740	V6TD	2.7	140	440	A6	2021	–	–	8.2	D	54		R
TX AWD TDCi	$45,740	V6TD	2.7	140	440	A6	2107	–	–	8.8	D	55		A
TS RWD	$42,240	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	2011	–	–	10.5	91	52		R
TS RWD TDCi	$45,490	V6TD	2.7	140	440	A6	2072	–	–	8.2	D	55	12/11	R
TS AWD TDCi	$50,490	V6TD	2.7	140	440	A6	2144	–	–	9.0	D	58	02/15	A
Titanium RWD	$48,490	L6	4.0	195	391	A6	2047	–	–	10.5	91	55	10/11	R
Titanium RWD TDCi	$51,741	V6TD	2.7	140	440	A6	2109	–	–	8.2	D	58		R
Titanium AWD TDCi	$56,740	V6TD	2.7	140	440	A6	2167	*10.0*	*17.1*	9.0	D	56	09/15	A
	Great Wall						3yr/100,000km www.greatwallmotors.com.au							
	X-series						Pricing wall smashed							
	☑ Great pricing for a mid-sized SUV; torquey turbo-diesel tries to shift all that weight... ☒ ... Questionable brand future locally; sluggish acceleration; refinement well below par • **The Pick:** The diesel manual. Or just about any second-hand Japanese SUV													
X240	$23,990*	L4	2.4	100	200	M5	1805	–	–	10.3	95	33		A
X200	$27,990*	L4TD	2.0	105	310	M6	1890	–	–	7.6	D	33		A
X200	$29,990*	L4TD	2.0	105	310	A5	1890	–	–	9.2	D	33		A
	Haval						5yr/100,000km www.haval.com.au							
	H2						Cheap, but is it cheerful?							
	☑ Entry point for a new Chinese brand doesn't look too bad on paper, engine included ☒ Drinks premium unleaded; AWD models manual-only; same name as a huge Hummer • **The Pick:** Instinct says stick with Mazda CX-3 or Honda HR-V, and it's justified													
Premium 2WD	$26,490	L4T	1.5	110	210	M6	1529		–	8.2	95			F
Premium 2WD	$28,490	L4T	1.5	110	210	A6			–	9.0	95			F
Premium 4WD	$28,990	L4T	1.5	110	210	M6	1609		–	8.5	95			A
Luxury 2WD	$28,490	L4T	1.5	110	210	M6	1529		–	8.2	95			F
Luxury 2WD	$30,490	L4T	1.5	110	210	A6			–	9.0	95			F
Luxury 4WD	$30,990	L4T	1.5	110	210	M6	1608		–	8.5	95			A
	H8						Size and presence							
	☑ Decent cabin presentation complete with Aussie leather; looks quite handsome ☒ Only five seats; heavy and thirsty; patchy track record of other Chinese brands here • **The Pick:** A lot of money for an unknown – we'd be looking at a Kia Sorento													
Premium 2WD	$41,990	L4T	2.0	160	324	A6	2051		–	12.2	95			R
Premium 4WD	$44,490	L4T	2.0	160	324	A6	2128		–	12.2	95			A
Luxury 4WD	$48,990	L4T	2.0	160	324	A6	2128		–	12.2	95			A
	H9						China's serious off-roader							
	☑ ZF gearbox with dual-range transfer case for decent off-road ability; seven seats ☒ It looks old-school Chinese, with an old-school separate chassis and sub-par dynamics • **The Pick:** If you must go there, grab an H9 Premium – it's cheaper													
Premium	$46,490	L4T	2.0	160	324	A6	2206		–	12.1	95			A
Luxury	$50,990	L4T	2.0	160	324	A6	2236		–	12.1	95			A
	Holden						3yr/100,000km www.holden.com.au							
	Barina Spark						Cute, but clueless							
	☑ Cute styling will appeal to young women; frugal 1.2; ESC and six airbags standard ☒ Neither a hot performer or a great handler; plasticky interior; oversized headlights • **The Pick:** A three-cylinder Suzuki Celerio is miles better, as is a regular Barina													
CD	$12,890	L4	1.2	59	107	M5	967	*12.4*	*18.7*	5.6	91	43	04/11	F
CD	$15,090	L4	1.2	63	113	A4	981	–	–	–	91	43		F

NEW ARRIVALS
New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary. Number of cyls or rotors. T= turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in sec s. (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

Barina — Styled by an Aussie

✅ Keen pricing, with alloys and cruise control standard; sharp styling; decent handling
❌ Wheezy Family One engine; short-geared manual; unsettled ride; RS auto calibration
• **The Pick:** Much-improved over the last model, but Barina remains an also-ran, not a leader

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
CD hatch	$15,390	L4	1.6	85	155	M5	1193	*11.1*	*17.8*	6.8	91	46	11/11	F
CD hatch	$17,590	L4	1.6	85	155	A6	1249	*12.4*	*18.6*	7.3	91	46	03/15	F
CD sedan	$15,890	L4	1.6	85	155	M5	1208	–	–	–	91	44		F
CD sedan	$18,090	L4	1.6	85	155	A6	1223	*13.1*	*18.9*	*9.5*	91	44	10/14	F
CDX hatch	$20,090	L4	1.6	85	155	A6	1220	–	–	–	91	47		F
CDX sedan	$20,590	L4	1.6	85	155	A6	1235	–	–	–	91	47		F
RS	$21,390	L4T	1.4	103	200	M6	1249	–	–	6.5	91	48	01/14	F
RS	$23,590	L4T	1.4	103	200	A6	1275	–	–	6.5	91	47	01/14	F

Cruze — Built (mostly) by Aussies, mate

✅ Simplified range for 2015; excellent handling of SRi and SRi-V models; impressive refinement; well-damped ride; value for money; decent boot; roomier than most rivals
❌ Harsh 1.8 petrol needs euthanising; cheap cabin; weight and thirst; ungainly new front
• **The Pick:** SRi manual or auto – both are good value and feature winning dynamics

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Equipe sedan	$19,890	L4	1.8	104	176	M5	1380	–	–	7.0	91	48		F
Equipe sedan	$22,090	L4	1.8	104	176	A6	1402	–	–	7.4	91	48		F
Equipe hatch	$19,890	L4	1.8	104	176	M5	1391	–	–	7.0	91	47		F
Equipe hatch	$22,090	L4	1.8	104	176	A6	1415	–	–	7.4	91	47		F
CDX sedan	$24,840	L4	1.8	104	176	A6	1409	–	–	7.0	91	49		F
SRi sedan	$23,140	L4T	1.6	132	230	M6	1450	–	–	7.4	91	51		F
SRi sedan	$25,340	L4T	1.6	132	230	A6	1479	–	–	7.9	91	51		F
SRi hatch	$23,140	L4T	1.6	132	230	M6	1460	–	–	7.4	91	51		F
SRi hatch	$25,340	L4T	1.6	132	230	A6	1488	–	–	7.9	91	51		F
SRi-V sedan	$27,140	L4T	1.6	132	230	M6	1465	–	–	7.4	91	52		F
SRi-V sedan	$29,340	L4T	1.6	132	230	A6	1493	–	–	7.9	91	52		F
SRi-V hatch	$27,140	L4T	1.6	132	230	M6	1474	*8.3*	*15.8*	7.4	91	52	11/14	F
SRi-V hatch	$29,240	L4T	1.6	132	230	A6	1503	*8.6*	*16.2*	7.9	91	52		F
CD Sportwagon	$24,090	L4	1.8	104	176	A6	–	–	–	7.4	91	54		F
CDX Sportwagon	$26,840	L4	1.8	104	176	A6	–	–	–	7.4	91	54		F

Astra — It's baaaaaaack (again)

✅ Way cooler than a Cruze; cheaper and faster than its Opel-badged predecessor
❌ It's not a brand new model; ageing interior; ditsy auto calibration; no reversing camera
• **The Pick:** VXR is a weapon that will give Golf GTI and Megane RS plenty to think about

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
GTC	$26,990	L4T	1.6	147	280	M6	1485	–	–	6.9	95	54		F
GTC	$29,190	L4T	1.6	125	260	A6	–	–	–	6.9	95	54		F
GTC Sport	$29,990	L4T	1.6	147	280	M6	1498	–	–	6.9	95	56	07/15	F
GTC Sport	$32,190	L4T	1.6	125	260	A6	–	–	–	6.9	95	54	07/15	F
VXR	$39,990	L4T	2.0	206	400	M6	1543	6.0	–	8.0	95	57	07/15	F

Malibu — Better than expected

✅ Surprisingly pleasant ride and handling, good seats, big boot, sweet petrol drivetrain
❌ Diesel a bit gruff, weight hampers performance and economy, horrible auto tip-shift
• **The Pick:** All are decent value on paper, but we'd drive a hard bargain. Or save for a Mazda 6

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
CD	$28,890	L4	2.4	123	225	A6	1583	10.2	–	8.0	91	37		F
CD	$32,890	L4TD	2.0	117	350	A6	1659	9.9	–	6.4	91	38	08/13	F
CDX	$32,790	L4	2.4	123	225	A6	1610	*9.2*	*16.6*	8.0	91	38	08/13	F
CDX	$36,790	L4TD	2.0	117	350	A6	1684	9.9	–	6.5	91	38		F

Insignia — Traction station

✅ All-paw traction; great front seats; decent grunt once it gets going; digital instruments
❌ Expensive up against V8 Commodores; grunt dialled down to protect the auto 'box
The Pick: A Commodore Redline would be a better bet, though Insignia has rarity on its side

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
VXR	$51,990	V6T	2.8	239	435	A6	–	6.3	–	10.9	95	50		A

Commodore — The V8s are bloody great

✅ Fantastic V8 grunt and sound; brilliant body control and balance; practicality and value
❌ Evoke still plain; chunky A-pillars; sedans miss out on wagon's split-fold rear seats
• **The Pick:** SS-V Redline for its superb chassis, arresting performance and Brembo brakes

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Evoke	$35,490	V6	3.0	185	290	A6	1622	*8.1*	*15.9*	8.3	91		07/13	R
Evoke Sportwagon	$37,490	V6	3.0	185	290	A6	1717	–	–	8.6	91			R
SV6	$37,290	V6	3.6	210	350	M6	1688	–	–	9.0	91			R
SV6	$39,490	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1685	–	–	9.0	91			R
SV6 Sportwagon	$41,490	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1776	*6.9*	*15.0*	9.3	91		04/14	R
SS	$44,490	V8	6.2	304	570	M6	1729	4.9	–	12.6	95			R
SS	$46,690	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1744	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS Sportwagon	$48,690	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1849	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS V	$47,990	V8	6.2	304	570	M6	1745	4.9	–	12.6	95			R
SS V	$50,190	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1754	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS V Redline	$53,990	V8	6.2	304	570	M6	1766	4.9	–	12.6	95		11/15	R
SS V Redline	$56,190	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1780	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS V Sportwagon	$52,190	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1849	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS V Redline S'wgn	$58,190	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1851	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
Calais	$41,290	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1702	*7.1*	*15.1*	9.0	91		02/15	R
Calais Sportwagon	$43,290	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1798	–	–	9.3	91			R
Calais V	$47,990	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1730	–	–	9.0	91			R
Calais V	$55,490	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1778	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
Calais V Sportwagon	$49,990	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1808	–	–	9.3	91			R
Calais V Sportwagon	$57,490	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1866	5.0	–	12.9	95			R

Ute — Australia's sports coupe

✅ Great dynamics for a car with such a huge boot, especially Redline; mega-strong LS3 V8
❌ No passenger overhead grab handle; V8 noise not as pronounced as sedans
• **The Pick:** SS for its V8 value, though the superb Redline (even on 20s) is where it's at

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Evoke	$33,490	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1656	–	–	9.0	91			R
SV6	$33,990	V6	3.6	210	350	M6	1680	–	–	9.0	91			R
SV6	$36,190	V6	3.6	210	350	A6	1681	–	–	9.0	91			R
SS	$40,990	V8	6.2	304	570	M6	1720	4.9	–	12.6	95			R
SS	$43,190	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1733	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS V	$44,490	V8	6.2	304	570	M6	1736	4.9	–	12.6	95			R
SS V	$46,690	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1749	5.0	–	12.9	95			R
SS V Redline	$50,490	V8	6.2	304	570	M6	1739	4.9	–	12.6	95		11/15	R
SS V Redline	$52,690	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1753	5.0	–	12.9	95			R

Caprice — The world's best-value limo

✅ Loads of rear seat leg room; tough elegance; great value for money; nice ride; grunt
❌ Badge snobs won't like it; exterior unchanged for years despite Commodore updates
• **The Pick:** WN Caprice has always been great and new LS3 V8 raises the bar

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
V	$60,490	V8	6.2	304	570	A6	1851	5.0	–	12.9	95			R

Cascada — Drop-top Astra, sans grunt

✅ Connected steering and capable chassis; well-equipped; spacious; handsome
❌ Weight hurts agility; performance and economy; cabin design far from cutting edge
• **The Pick:** An Astra, although Cascada is fresh metal in a class where fashion rules

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$41,990	L4T	1.6	125	260	A6	1744	9.9	–	7.5	95	62	07/15	F

Trax — Trax marks the spot

✅ Neatly packaged and styled; steering and handling; excellent auto; value for money
❌ Hemmed-in rear seat; daggy-looking LS; 1.8's raucous manners; LTZ's awful vinyl trim
• **The Pick:** Considering its vastly superior engine, the LTZ 1.4T, hopefully with a discount

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
LS	$23,990	L4	1.8	103	175	M5	1356	–	–	7.0	91	48	10/13	F
LS	$26,190	L4	1.8	103	175	A6	1371	–	–	7.6	91	47		F
LTZ	$28,490	L4	1.8	103	175	A6	1371	*11.4*	*18.0*	7.6	91	48	01/14	F
LTZ	$29,990	L4T	1.4	103	200	A6	1421	*9.3*	*16.7*	6.9	91	48	05/15	F

Captiva 5 — Compact price, not-so-compact size

✅ Attractive Euro styling; decent smooth-road handling; reasonably roomy; cheap pricing
❌ Four-pot petrol and diesel are both noisy; dated cabin; choppy ride; lifeless steering
• **The Pick:** Captiva is cheap (literally), but also old and underdone. Choose a CX-5 or Kuga

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
LT	$26,490	L4	2.4	123	230	M6	–	–	–	8.8	91	46		F
LT	$28,190	L4	2.4	123	230	A6	–	–	–	8.8	91	46		F
LT	$32,690	L4TD	2.2	135	400	A6	–	–	–	8.2	D	48		A
LTZ	$31,690	L4	2.4	123	230	A6	–	–	–	8.8	91	49		F
LTZ	$35,690	L4TD	2.2	135	400	A6	–	–	–	8.2	D	46		A

Captiva 7 — Nip-tucked and even more affordable

✅ Lots of metal for the money; nine years old but decent to look at; seven seats standard
❌ Commodore-derived 3.0 V6 is thrashy; can't match a Territory for dynamics or comfort
• **The Pick:** LT diesel is affordable, torquey and well-equipped, but Captiva is way past it

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
LS	$30,490	L4	2.4	123	230	A6	–	–	–	9.1	91	50	05/11	F
LS	$33,490	L4TD	2.2	135	400	A6	–	–	–	7.6	D	51		A
LT	$36,490	V6	3.0	190	288	A6	–	–	–	10.1	91	47		A
LT	$37,490	L4TD	2.2	135	400	A6	–	–	–	8.5	D	47		A
LTZ	$40,490	V6	3.0	190	288	A6	–	–	–	10.1	91	47		A
LTZ	$41,490	L4TD	2.2	135	400	A6	–	–	–	8.5	D	47		A

Colorado 7 — Seven-seat grand-daddy space master

✅ Better value than almost identical blood brother, the Isuzu MU-X
❌ Not as cohesive and polished as the slightly smaller Captiva 7, and doesn't drive as well
• **The Pick:** If you're space-chasing, the entry level LT has all you need in terms of kit

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
LT	$47,490	L4TD	2.8	147	500	A6	2170			9.2	D	53		A
LTZ	$50,990	L4TD	2.8	147	500	A6	2205			9.2	D	53		A

HSV — 3yr/100,000km — www.hsv.com.au

Gen-F2 — Blow(n) me down!

✅ Brilliant GTS drivetrain, R8s not far behind; superb agility for such a big, powerful car
❌ F2 GTS unchanged; cheaper 340kW LS3 models benched until 2016; blown V8's thirst
• **The Pick:** GTS is a legendary machine, or wait for next year's rumoured new hero car

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Clubsport R8 LSA	$80,990	V8S	6.2	400	671	M6	1890	–	–	15.3	98			R
Clubsport R8 LSA	$83,490	V8S	6.2	400	671	A6	1907	*4.7*	*12.9*	15.0	98		12/15	R
Club' R8 LSA Tourer	$85,990	V8S	6.2	400	671	A6	1974	–	–	15.0	98			R
Senator Sig' LSA	$92,990	V8S	6.2	400	671	M6	1885	–	–	15.3	98			R
Senator Sig' LSA	$92,990	V8S	6.2	400	671	A6	1902	4.6	12.6	15.0	98			R
GTS	$95,990	V8S	6.2	430	740	M6	1886	*4.7*	*12.8*	15.3	98		09/13	R
GTS	$98,490	V8S	6.2	430	740	A6	1903	*4.5*	*12.6*	15.0	98		10/14	R

Grange — The Stealth Gen-F

✅ Gen-F Grange scores fruity 340kW V8, top-spec interior and lastest MRC suspension
❌ Misses out on the new supercharged V8; looks unchanged; no aluminium boot/bonnet
• **The Pick:** Australia's take on an AMG S-class is a much-altered car beneath its familiar skin

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$86,990	V8	6.2	340	570	A6	1844	–	–	12.9	98	50		R

Maloo — Business up front, party out back

✅ Unique take on a two-door sports car; feels premium inside; strong supercharged V8
❌ Hard tonneau cover looks bulky; it's not particularly good at carrying heavy things
• **The Pick:** Finally has the punch to justify its price premium over the awesome SS Redline

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
R8	$76,990	V8S	6.2	400	671	M6	1870	–	–	15.3	98			R
R8	$79,490	V8S	6.2	400	671	A6	1887	–	–	15.8	98			R

Honda

3yr/100,000km
www.honda.com.au

Jazz — Lower price, greater class

✅ Ripper entry price for all-new Jazz; polished interior; superb packaging flexibility
❌ Messy styling; vague steering; numb handling; value dissipates at the top end
• **The Pick:** Either the entry-level VTi or possibly the neatly equipped VTi-S CVT

VTi	$14,990	L4	1.5	88	145	M5	1048	–	–	6.2	91	55		F
VTi	$16,990	L4	1.5	88	145	C	1053	*10.2*	*17.3*	5.8	91	53	03/15	F
VTi-S	$19,790	L4	1.5	88	145	C	1095	–	–	5.8	91	56		F
VTi-L	$22,490	L4	1.5	88	145	C	1130	–	–	5.8	91	57	10/14	F

City — Booted Jazz, re-booted

✅ Riding on an all-new platform, new-gen City is far from the putrid drive we expected
❌ Not pretty, but it's better in the flesh; VTi-L's wheels introduce some ride harshness
• **The Pick:** VTi manual if you have to, though the CVT ain't too bad if you don't like cars

VTi	$15,990	L4	1.5	88	145	M5	1082	–	–	5.8	91	48		F
VTi	$17,990	L4	1.5	88	145	C	1103	*10.7*	*17.7*	5.7	91	48	10/14	F
VTi-L	$21,390	L4	1.5	88	145	C	1107	–	–	5.7	91	50	08/14	F

Civic sedan — The more things change ...

✅ Price and equipment; keen 1.8- and 2.0-litre fours; competent handling
❌ Same-again styling; ordinary refinement; average steering and ride; depressingly dated
• **The Pick:** Easily outclassed by Golf or Mazda 3. Please make the next one good Honda!

Vi	$18,490	L4	1.8	103	174	M5	1210	–	–	6.8	91	46		F
VTi	$20,490	L4	1.8	103	174	M5	1210	–	–	6.8	91	48	05/12	F
VTi	$22,490	L4	1.8	103	174	A5	1222	–	–	6.7	91	48	05/12	F
VTi-L	$23,990	L4	1.8	103	174	A5	1245	–	–	6.7	91	52	08/12	F
Sport	$30,990	L4	2.0	114	188	A5	1290	–	–	7.5	91	52	05/12	F

Civic hatch — The Pommy Civic

✅ Makeover brings dynamics upgrade; clever seating; impressive drivetrains
❌ Messy dash arrangement; range-wide price rises make rivals more attractive
• **The Pick:** DTi-S manual, though Focus, Mazda 3 and Golf are all superior

VTi-S	$22,150	L4	1.8	104	174	M5	1265	–	–	6.4	91	56		F
VTi-S	$24,450	L4	1.8	104	174	A5	1302	8.8	16.5	6.6	91	56	12/12	F
VTi-L	$26,990	L4	1.8	104	174	A5	1318	–	–	6.6	91	56		F
VTi-L Navigation	$31,090	L4	1.8	104	174	A5	1325	–	–	6.6	91	52		F

Accord — The car that can (sort of) steer itself

✅ Quite stylish for an Accord Seppo; very refined; slick Hybrid's improved chassis balance
❌ A car for those who begrudgingly drive; dated five-speed autos; as boring as a white wall
• **The Pick:** A Hybrid if you have the dough. Or some porcelain veneers in Bangkok

VTi	$31,490	L4	2.4	129	225	A5	1510	–	–	7.9	91	45	07/13	F
VTi-S	$33,490	L4	2.4	129	225	A5	1530	–	–	7.9	91	45		F
VTi-L	$41,490	L4	2.4	129	225	A5	1572	*9.0*	*16.5*	8.1	91	44	08/13	F
V6L	$51,990	V6	3.5	206	339	A6	1667	–	–	9.2	91	47	07/13	F
Sport Hybrid	$58,990	L4H	2.0	146	307	C	1642	–	–	4.6	91	45		F

HR-V — Best Honda currently on sale

✅ Coupe-esque styling; generous equipment; 'magic seat' packaging; okay dynamics
❌ Limited range (no 4WD, no manual); flimsy luggage cover; anaesthetised steering
• **The Pick:** Entry-level VTi offers a tempting package for a tasty price

VTi	$24,990	L4	1.8	105	172	C	1328	–	–	6.6	91	50	04/15	F
VTi-S	$27,990	L4	1.8	105	172	C	1366	–	–	6.9	91	50		F
VTi-L	$32,990	L4	1.8	105	172	C	1366	*10.2*	*17.5*	6.9	91	52	05/15	F

CR-V — Smaller outside, bigger inside

✅ Excellent 1.6 diesel; sweet petrol drivetrains; roomy cabin and boot; thoughtful design
❌ 2.0-litre trades flexibility for economy; dull dynamics; patchy ride; vague steering
• **The Pick:** The less you spend, the better, though the new DTi-L's 1.6 diesel is terrific

VTi	$27,490	L4	2.0	114	190	M6	1460	10.0	–	7.8	91	52		F
VTi	$29,790	L4	2.0	114	190	A5	1488	–	–	7.7	91	52		F
VTi AWD	$32,790	L4	2.4	140	222	A5	1580	–	–	8.7	91	54		A
VTi-S	$32,290	L4	2.0	114	190	A5	1488	–	–	7.7	91	54		F
VTi-S AWD	$35,290	L4	2.4	140	222	A5	1580	–	–	8.7	91	54		A
VTi-L	$39,290	L4	2.0	114	190	A5	1488	–	–	7.7	91	55		F
VTi-L AWD	$42,290	L4	2.4	140	222	A5	1580	*11.3*	*17.9*	8.7	91	55	08/14	A
DTi-L AWD	$44,290	L4TD	1.6	118	350	A9	1754	10.2	–	5.9	D		03/16	A

Odyssey — Odyssey becomes a breeder bus

✅ Tall, ungainly new body makes Odyssey a true Tarago alternative; improved economy
❌ Everything great about the old Odyssey no longer applies – this one's a van with seats
• **The Pick:** Besides a vasectomy, probably the VTi for its additional seat and lower price

VTi	$37,610	L4	2.4	129	225	C	1776	–	–	7.6	91	64	04/14	F
VTi-L	$46,040	L4	2.4	129	225	C	1819	–	–	7.8	91	65	04/14	F

Hyundai

5yr/unlimited
www.hyundai.com.au

Accent — Picks up where i20 left off

✅ Space, equipment and pricing argue; decent CVT for 1.4; Oz-only SR adds sporty flavour
❌ Gluggy steering, restless chassis and anaemic 1.4-litre donk dull the shine for drivers
• **The Pick:** Either an SR manual or something else entirely ... like an i30

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Active hatch	$14,990	L4	1.4	74	133	M6	1115	–	–	5.7	91			F
Active hatch	$16,990	L4	1.4	74	133	C	1140	–	–	6.2	91			F
Active sedan	$14,990	L4	1.4	74	133	M6	1115	–	–	5.7	91			F
Active sedan	$16,990	L4	1.4	74	133	C	1140	–	–	6.2	91			F
SR hatch	$16,990	L4	1.6	103	167	M6	1115	9.0	16.5	6.1	91			F
SR hatch	$18,990	L4	1.6	103	167	A6	1140	–	–	6.6	91			F

Elantra — Series 2 more than a facelift

✅ Updated styling; newfound handling balance and country-road composure; equipment
❌ Electric steering lacks feel; ride too firm in town; engine lacks character
• **The Pick:** The entry-level Active – it's the best-riding and the best value

Active	$20,990	L4	1.8	110	178	M6	1231	–	–	6.6	91	46	03/14	F
Active	$23,240	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1249	–	–	7.1	91	45		F
SE	$21,750	L4	1.8	110	178	M6	1231	–	–	6.6	91	46		F
SE	$24,000	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1249	–	–	7.1	91	46		F
Elite	$26,890	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1309	–	–	7.1	91	46		F
Premium	$30,540	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1309	–	–	7.1	91	47		F

i30 — Driving and ownership ease

✅ Handsome style; uprated diesel with dual-clutch 'box; EU-sourced wagon scores IRS
❌ Volume-selling 1.8 off the pace; dynamics and refinement lack polish; steering is sub-par
• **The Pick:** New Series II SR gets a sweeter 2.0, but any i30 hatch is a C-grade proposition

Active	$20,990	L4	1.8	107	175	M6	1248	–	–	7.0	91	56		F
Active	$23,290	L4	1.8	107	175	A6	1270	–	–	7.3	91	54		F
Active X	$22,090	L4	1.8	107	175	M6	1248	–	–	7.0	91	49		F
Active X	$24,390	L4	1.8	107	175	A6	1270	–	–	7.3	91	48		F
Active CRDi	$23,590	L4TD	1.6	100	260	M6	1310	–	–	4.6	D	56		F
Active CRDi	$25,890	L4TD	1.6	100	300	S7	1337	–	–	4.9	D	56		F
Active X CRDi	$24,690	L4TD	1.6	100	260	M6	1310	–	–	4.6	D	50		F
Active X CRDi	$26,990	L4TD	1.6	100	300	S7	1337	–	–	4.9	D	49		F
SR	$25,590	L4	2.0	124	201	M6	1285	–	–	7.3	91	56		F
SR	$27,890	L4	2.0	124	201	A6	–	–	–	7.7	91	56		F
SR Premium	$30,590	L4	2.0	124	201	M6	–	–	–	7.3	91	58		F
SR Premium	$32,890	L4	2.0	124	201	A6	–	–	–	7.7	91	58		F
Premium CRDi	$34,490	L4TD	1.6	100	300	S7	1337	–	–	4.9	D	58		F
Tourer	$27,990	L4	1.6	98	163	S7	–	–	–	6.0	91	52		F
Tourer CRDi	$30,590	L4TD	1.6	100	300	S7	–	–	–	4.8	D	52		F
Tourer Elite CRDi	$34,190	L4TD	1.6	100	300	S7	–	–	–	4.8	D	53		F

i40 — Euro-flavoured Korean

✅ Mixes Euro style and space with decent dynamics and effective drivetrains
❌ Ultimately not that quick; Premium's ride quality and price; no petrol sedan
• **The Pick:** An Active Tourer turbo-diesel, with Hyundai's new seven-speed dual-clutch 'box

Active sedan CRDi	$33,090	L4TD	1.7	104	340	S7	1524	–	–	5.1	D	66		F
Active Tourer	$32,490	L4	2.0	121	203	A6	1483	–	–	7.5	91	66		F
Active Tourer CRDi	$35,090	L4TD	1.7	104	340	S7	1539	–	–	5.1	D	67		F
Premium sedan CRDi	$41,990	L4TD	1.7	104	340	S7	1524	–	–	5.1	D	68	F	
Premium Tourer	$41,390	L4	2.0	121	203	A6	1483	–	–	7.5	91	68		F
Premium Tourer CRDi	$43,990	L4TD	1.7	104	340	S7	1539	–	–	5.1	D	68		F

Sonata — Competent, conservative

✅ Smart styling; excellent road manners; generous rear seat and boot space
❌ Well-built cabin lacks sophistication; doesn't have the safety kit of some rivals; thirsty
• **The Pick:** Elite, which gets the turbo donk and a decent amount of kit

Active	$29,990	L4	2.4	138	241	A6	1500	–	–	8.3	91	44		F
Elite	$36,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A6	1560	–	–	9.2	91	45	04/15	F
Premium	$41,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A6	1645	–	–	9.2	91	44	04/15	F

Genesis — Hyundai's first true luxury car

✅ Excellent quality; luxury levels of refinement; impressive ride/handling mix; cabin space
❌ Ageing V6 is thirsty and a bit thrashy; expensive option packs undermine its value
• **The Pick:** Either the base Genesis or the $71K Sensory model with premium leather

	$60,000	V6	3.8	232	397	A8	1890	6.5	–	11.2	91	52	12/14	R
Sensory	$71,000	V6	3.8	232	397	A8	1890	6.5	–	11.2	91	51	12/14	R
Ultimate	$82,000	V6	3.8	232	397	A8	1890	6.5	–	11.2	91	51	12/14	R

Veloster — Brave two-plus-one-door coupe

✅ Innovative design, keen pricing, individual styling and Korea's first-ever dual-clutcher
❌ Can't match the steering and handling excellence of 86/BRZ; atmo 1.6 struggles
• **The Pick:** Kids and fashionistas will love it. Enthusiasts will wish they shopped elsewhere

	$24,490	L4	1.6	103	167	M6	1180	*9.8*	*16.9*	6.4	91	61	04/12	F
	$26,990	L4	1.6	103	167	S6	1215	–	–	6.4	91	61		F
+	$29,490	L4	1.6	103	167	M6	1230	–	–	6.4	91	62	04/12	F
+	$31,990	L4	1.6	103	167	S6	1265	–	–	6.4	91	63		F
SR Turbo	$29,990	L4T	1.6	150	265	M6	1265	6.5	*14.6*	6.9	91	62	03/13	F
SR Turbo	$33,990	L4T	1.6	150	265	S7	1305	–	–	7.1	91	63		F
SR Turbo +	$33,990	L4T	1.6	150	265	M6	1307	–	–	6.9	91	64		F
SR Turbo +	$36,490	L4T	1.6	150	265	S7	1347	–	–	7.1	91	64		F

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T=turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F=Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

Tucson — ix35 replacement steps up

✓ Muscular design looks the business; broad model range with flexible 1.6 turbo-petrol
✗ Front-drivers only available with atmo 2.0 engines; Highlander the only Tucson with AEB
• **The Pick:** Elite AWD with new turbo engine, seven-speed dual-clutch and sharp pricing

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Active	$27,990	L4	2.0	114	192	M6					91	50		F
Active	$30,490	L4	2.0	114	192	A6					91	50		F
Active X	$30,490	L4	2.0	121	203	M6	1484			7.8	91	52		F
Active X	$32,990	L4	2.0	121	203	A6				7.9	91	50		F
Elite	$35,240	L4	2.0	121	203	A6	1569			7.9	91	52		F
Elite	$38,240	L4T	1.6	130	265	S7	1575			7.7	91	53		A
Elite CRDi	$40,240	L4TD	2.0	136	400	A6	1622			6.4	D	52		A
Highlander	$43,490	L4T	1.6	130	265	S7	1690	*8.1*	*16.0*	7.7	91	53	11/15	A
Highlander CRDi	$45,490	L4TD	2.0	136	400	A6	1744			6.8	D	53		A

Santa Fe — The value seven-seater

✓ Grunty diesel engine option; more equipment with Series II update; functional interior
✗ Petrol engine struggles; interior presentation nothing special; firm ride on Highlander
• **The Pick:** Highlander CRDi is expensive but brings lashings of gear and AEB

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Active	$38,490	L4	2.4	138	241	M6	1720	–	–	9.4	91			A
Active	$40,990	L4	2.4	138	241	A6	1743	–	–	9.4	91			A
Active CRDi	$41,490	L4TD	2.2	147	440	M6	1828	–	–	6.3	D			A
Active CRDi	$43,990	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	1857	–	–	7.4	D			A
Elite CRDi	$48,490	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	1857	–	–	7.4	D			A
Highlander CRDi	$53,240	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	1857	–	–	7.4	D			A

iMax — Value-packed eight-seater

✓ Keenly priced; plenty of fruit, including twin sliding side doors and rear parking sensors
✗ Concerns over crashworthiness and dynamics; suffice to say it's an LCV with extra seats
• **The Pick:** It's roomy, but it's a van. Citroen's slick Grand C4 Picasso is the same money!

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
2.4	$37,290	L4	2.4	129	228	A4	2128	–	–	10.6	91	51		R
2.5 CRDi	$41,490	L4TD	2.5	100	343	M6	2215	–	–	8.1	D	59		R

Infiniti

4yr/120,000km
www.infinitiicars.com.au

Q50 — Shoots for Europe, and falls short

✓ Thrusty and efficient V6 Hybrid drivetrain; slick build quality; plush seats; rarity
✗ Ill-conceived electronic systems and steer-by-wire steering spell dynamic confusion
• **The Pick:** One of the new 2.0-litre turbo-petrol fours without all the crappo techno stuff

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
2.0 GT	$50,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7		8.5	–	7.3	95	53		R
2.0 S	$56,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7		8.5	–	7.3	95	54		R
2.0 S Premium	$60,500	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7		8.5	–	7.3	95	54	11/14	R
2.2d GT	$51,900	L4TD	2.1	125	400	A7	1729	8.5	–	5.2	D	53		R
2.2d S	$57,900	L4TD	2.1	125	400	A7	1729	8.5	–	5.2	D	54		R
2.2d S Premium	$61,900	L4TD	2.1	125	400	A7	1729	8.5	–	5.2	D	54		R
3.5h S	$67,900	V6H	3.5	268	546	S7	1775	*5.4*	*13.7*	6.8	95	54	12/14	R
3.5h S Premium	$73,400	V6H	3.5	268	546	S7	1853	5.4	–	7.2	95	54		A

Q60 — Fine looks, heritage, character

✓ Coupe's driver appeal; standard equipment; muscular V6; terrific seats; great vision
✗ Convertible's wobbles and stiff ride; foot-operated park brake
• **The Pick:** GT Premium coupe delivers BMW-style thrills for considerably less

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
GT Premium	$63,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1670	5.9	–	10.5	95	50	03/12	R
S Premium	$69,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1692	*6.1*	*14.2*	10.5	95	51	05/14	R
S Prem. Conv.	$77,400	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1866	6.4	–	11.4	95	50	03/12	R

Q70 — Japan's 5 Series? Not quite

✓ Pacey, efficient hybrid; interesting looks; interesting handling; superb cabin quality
✗ Super-light and strangely geared steering; Hyundai Genesis is a better luxury sedan
• **The Pick:** Rivals a Lexus GS but won't touch a 5 Series or E-Class

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
GT	$68,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1652	6.2	–	10.2	98	41	11/12	R
GT	$68,900	V6TD	3.0	175	550	A7	1776	6.9	–	7.5	D	41		R
S Premium	$78,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1702	6.2	–	10.2	98	41		R
3.0d GT	$70,900	V6TD	3.0	175	550	A7	1776	6.9	–	7.5	D	41		R
3.0d S Premium	$80,900	V6TD	3.0	175	550	A7	1826	6.9	–	7.5	D	42		R
3.5h Premium	$82,900	V6H	3.5	225	350	A7	1785	5.5	–	6.9	98	42		R

QX70 — Show-stopping style

✓ Roomy, luxurious and powerful soft-roader; plenty of grip and grunt; unique appearance
✗ Cargo capacity and visibility suffer for its style; intrusive tyre roar drowns out the V8
• **The Pick:** Diesel for torque, V8 for grunt, any of them for QX's stand-apart styling

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
3.7 GT	$75,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1893	6.8	–	12.1	98	50	11/12	A
3.7 S	$82,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1893	6.8	–	12.1	98	50		A
3.7 S Premium	$85,900	V6	3.7	235	360	A7	1908	6.8	–	12.1	98	61		A
3.0d GT	$77,900	V6TD	3.0	175	550	A7	2036	8.3	–	9.0	D	50		A
3.0d S	$84,900	V6TD	3.0	175	550	A7	2036	8.3	–	9.0	D	50	11/12	A
3.0d S Premium	$87,900	V6TD	3.0	175	550	A7	2051	8.3	–	9.0	D	61		A
5.0 S Premium	$104,400	V8	5.0	287	500	A7	1992	5.8	–	13.1	98	61		A

QX80 — Patrol V8 hit with a (big) ugly stick

✓ Loaded with gear; willing V8 makes for decent performance; cheaper than its Lexus rival
✗ Big, heavy and thirsty; no diesel option; 22-inch wheels not suited to off-roading
• **The Pick:** Check out a Y62 Patrol ... or a diesel LandCruiser

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$110,900	V8	5.6	298	560	A7	2770	–	–		98	58		A

Isuzu

5yr/130,000km
www.isuzuute.com.au

MU-X — Ute with a kid-friendly boot

✓ Ready for adventure; big towing capacity; interior kitted out with family in mind
✗ Bulletproof Isuzu engine lacks Colorado 7's grunt; lumbering separate-chassis ride
• **The Pick:** Range-topper adds a roof-mounted DVD player, which will mute the kids

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
LS-M	$40,500	L4TD	3.0	130	380	A5	2000			8.2	D	52		R
LS-U	$42,000	L4TD	3.0	130	380	A5	2000			8.2	D	52		R
LS-M 4WD	$45,600	L4TD	3.0	130	380	A5	2040			8.4	D	53		A
LS-U 4WD	$47,100	L4TD	3.0	130	380	A5	2040			8.4	D	53		A
LS-T 4WD	$53,500	L4TD	3.0	130	380	A5	2060			8.4	D	53		A

Jaguar

3yr/100,000km
www.jaguar.com.au

XE — Goes claws-out for C-Class and 3 Series

✓ Great steering; well-sorted chassis (especially R-Sport); gets all-new Ingenium diesel
✗ Interior lacks glamour and sparkle; auto not always in sync with the driver; storage space
• **The Pick:** New diesel is a cracker but 25t R-Sport gets our vote for its chassis/performance

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
20t Prestige	$60,400	L4T	2.0	147	280	A8	1530	*7.7*	*15.6*	7.5	95	54	10/15	R
20d Prestige	$62,800	L4TD	2.0	132	430	A8	1565	7.8	–	4.2	D	53		R
25t Prestige	$64,900	L4T	2.0	177	340	A8	1530	6.8	–	7.5	95	53		R
20t R-Sport	$64,400	L4T	2.0	147	280	A8	–	7.7	–	7.5	95	54		R
20d R-Sport	$66,800	L4TD	2.0	132	430	A8	–	7.8	–	4.2	D	54		R
25t R-Sport	$68,900	L4T	2.0	177	340	A8	–	6.8	–	7.5	95	54	10/15	R
25t Portfolio	$70,400	L4T	2.0	177	340	A8	–	6.8	–	7.5	95	54		R
S	$104,200	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1665	5.1	–	8.1	95	54		R

XF — All-new replacement imminent

✓ Slick exterior and interior banishes ye olde feel; lovely ride and handling; superb XFR
✗ Coupe-like roofline reduces headroom; rear seat set too low; diesel four is laggy
• **The Pick:** New 2.0T and 2.2D are brilliant value. As is the rapid twin-turbo 3.0D S

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
2.0T Premium Lux	$74,285	L4T	2.0	177	340	A8	–	7.9	–	8.9	95	47		R
2.0T R-Sport	$81,185	L4T	2.0	177	340	A8	–	7.9	–	8.9	95	47		R
2.2D Premium Lux	$76,500	L4TD	2.2	147	450	A8	1745	8.5	–	5.2	D	47	01/12	R
2.2D R-Sport	$83,400	L4TD	2.2	147	450	A8	1745	9.3	*16.8*	5.2	D	47	08/12	R
3.0 Premium Lux	$93,040	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1690	5.9		9.8	95	47		R
3.0 R-Sport	$99,940	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1690	5.9		9.8	95	47		R
3.0D S	$95,900	V6TTD	3.0	202	600	A8	1810	6.5	*14.6*	6.3	D	47	08/10	R
3.0D S Portfolio	$112,500	V6TTD	3.0	202	600	A8	1810	6.4	–	6.3	D	47		R
XFR	$188,685	V8S	5.0	375	625	A8	1842	*4.8*	*12.9*	11.6	95	55	04/12	R
XFR-S	$221,685	V8S	5.0	404	680	A8	1987	4.4	-	-	98	55	09/13	R

XJ — Flagship from British India

✓ Traffic-stopping presence; sharp dynamics; stunning cabin; not a pipe or slipper in sight
✗ LWB models are getting expensive, S/C models can get thirsty; low-speed ride on 20s
• **The Pick:** Price no object? It has to be the long-wheelbase, supercharged Supersport

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
3.0S Premium Lux	$197,585	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1755	5.9	–	9.6	95	38	–	R
3.0S Prem Lux LWB	$197,585	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1765	5.9	–	9.6	95	38	–	R
3.0D Premium Lux	$198,800	V6TTD	3.0	202	600	A8	1775	6.4	–	6.1	D	37	–	R
3.0D Prem Lux LWB	$198,800	V6TTD	3.0	202	600	A8	1825	6.4	–	6.1	D	37	–	R
3.0S Portfolio	$221,385	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1755	5.9	–	9.6	95	37	–	R
5.0 S/C S'sport LWB	$297,140	V8S	5.0	375	625	A8	1915	4.9	–	11.6	98	51	–	R
5.0 S/C XJR	$297,140	V8S	5.0	404	680	A8	1880	4.6		11.6	98	44	–	R

F-Type — The E-Type's true successor

✓ Looks stunning, drives superbly, sounds incredible and has an addictive feel-good factor
✗ All-aluminium construction, but a bit tubby compared to a Porsche; near-useless boot
• **The Pick:** The mid-level V6 S has the best balance; only real power junkies need the V8 S

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Coupe	$119,080	V6S	3.0	250	450	M6	1577		–	9.8	95	50		R
Coupe	$124,080	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	–	5.3	–	8.8	95	50		R
Convertible	$137,780	V6S	3.0	250	450	M6	–		–	9.8	95	50		R
Convertible	$142,780	V6S	3.0	250	450	A8	1597	5.3	–	9.0	95	50		R
V6 S Coupe	$151,380	V6S	3.0	280	460	M6	–	–	–	9.8	95	50		R
V6 S Coupe	$156,380	V6S	3.0	280	460	A8	–	4.9	–	8.8	95	50		R
V6 S Convertible	$175,080	V6S	3.0	280	460	A8	1614	*4.8*	*13.1*	9.1	95	50	11/13	R
V6 S AWD Coupe	$172,080	V6S	3.0	280	460	A8	1674	–	–	8.9	95	50		A
V8 R Coupe	$226,580	V8S	5.0	404	680	A8	1650	4.2	–	11.1	95	50	08/14	R
V8 R Convertible	$242,280	V8S	5.0	404	680	A8	1665	4.2	–	11.1	95	50		R
V8 R AWD Coupe	$245,280	V8S	5.0	404	680	A8	1730	4.1	–	11.3	95	50		A
V8 R AWD C'tible	$260,980	V8S	5.0	404	680	A8	1745	4.1	–	11.3	95	50		A

Jeep

3yr/100,000km
www.jeep.com.au

Patriot — Cheap ... and feels it

✓ Sharpened prices make it one of the cheapest SUVs in Oz; plenty of standard equipment
✗ Cheapest Patriot is front-drive only; just four airbags; hard and cheap cabin plastics
• **The Pick:** Base Sport's price is super-sharp

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Sport	$25,700	L4	2.0	115	190	M5	1490	–	–	7.6	91	46		F
Sport	$27,700	L4	2.0	115	190	C	1525	–	–	8.2	91	45		F
Limited	$34,000	L4	2.4	125	220	C	1570	11.3	–	9.1	91	46	09/08	A

Compass — A Patriot with a few more curves

✅ Patriot-based with mini-Grand Cherokee looks; well-specced; Limited's cranking audio
❌ Underwhelming engines; interior plastics; no turbo-diesel; sub-par dynamics
• **The Pick:** Limited for kit and soft-roadability; FWD Sport for urban warriors

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Sport	$27,000	L4	2.0	115	220	M6	1437	–	–	7.6	91	52		F
Sport	$29,000	L4	2.0	115	220	C	1437	–	–	8.3	91	53		F
North	$31,000	L4	2.0	115	220	A6	1449	–	–	8.3	91	48		F
Limited	$35,500	L4	2.4	125	220	A6	1522	11.3	–	9.0	91	44		A

Renegade — Small SUV, big price

✅ Spacious for a small SUV; design attention-to-detail; decent handling and AWD system
❌ Sticker shock; fiddly open-roof system; flawed steering; where's the 125kW 1.4 turbo?
• **The Pick:** At the price, a Cherokee makes sense. Or a Renegade Longitude if you must

Sport	$28,000	L4	1.6	81	152	M5	1295	–	–	6.0	91			F
Sport	$32,000	L4T	1.4	103	230	S6	1295	–	–	5.9	91			F
Longitude	$33,000	L4T	1.4	103	230	S6	1295	–	–	5.9	91			F
Limited	$36,000	L4T	1.4	103	230	S6	1295	–	–	5.9	91			F
Trailhawk	$40,000	L4	2.4	129	230	A9	1550	–	–	7.5	91			A

Wrangler — Tow it to wherever you want to go off-road

✅ Strong outputs of Pentastar V6 and CRD oiler; worthy for off-road enthusiasts...
❌ ...but not for driving (or quality) enthusiasts; loose steering and cumbersome handling
• **The Pick:** Sport if you frequent sand dunes; Rubicon if you want to climb Uluru

Sport 2dr	$34,000	V6	3.6	209	347	M6	1913	–	–	11.2	91	59		A
Sport 2dr	$35,000	V6	3.6	209	347	A5	1924	–	–	11.3	91	57		A
Sport CRD 2dr	$39,000	L4TD	2.8	147	410	M6	1858	–	–	8.0	D	49		A
Sport CRD 2dr	$40,000	L4TD	2.8	147	460	A5	2000	–	–	8.6	D	49		A
Rubicon 2dr	$43,000	V6	3.6	209	347	A5	1919	–	–	11.3	91	47		A
Sport Unlimited 4dr	$38,000	V6	3.6	209	347	M6	2073	8.6	–	11.8	91	58		A
Sport Unlimited 4dr	$39,000	V6	3.6	209	347	A5	2053	–	–	11.7	91	58		A
Sport Unlimited 4dr	$43,000	L4TD	2.8	147	410	M6	1998	11.1	–	8.3	D	59		A
Sport Unlimited 4dr	$44,000	L4TD	2.8	147	460	A5	1978	–	–	9.5	D	56		A
Overland 4dr	$49,000	V6	3.6	209	347	A5	2053	8.6	–	11.9	91	53		A
Rubicon U'ted 4dr	$51,000	V6	3.6	209	347	A5	2053	–	–	11.9	91	53		A

Cherokee — Avant-garde Italo-American

✅ Striking appearance; strong drivetrains; off-road ability of Trailhawk; unique appeal
❌ Limited rear-seat headroom under full-size sunroof; ninth gear too tall for Australia
• **The Pick:** Limited's appointments and performance, unless you need Trailhawk's low range

Sport	$33,500	L4	2.4	130	229	A9	1738	–	–	8.3	91	53	08/14	F
Longitude	$39,000	V6	3.2	200	316	A9	1834	–	–	10.0	91	54		A
Trailhawk	$47,500	V6	3.2	200	316	A9	1862	–	–	10.0	91	55	08/14	A
Limited	$44,000	V6	3.2	200	316	A9	1834	–	–	10.0	91	55		A
Limited	$49,000	L4TD	2.0	125	350	A9	1854	–	–	5.8	D	55	12/14	A

Grand Cherokee — Finally worth checking out

✅ ZF eight-speed auto is a sweet shifter; top value; great touchscreen
❌ Gets a bit fumble-footed on really tight, broken roads; foot park brake digs into shins
• **The Pick:** V6 petrol is attractively-priced, but the diesel is torquier; the V8 more exciting

Laredo	$44,500	V6	3.6	210	347	A8	1998	8.3	–	10.1	91	61	09/13	R
Laredo	$48,500	V6	3.6	210	347	A8	2084	–	–	10.4	91	57		A
Laredo CRD	$54,500	V6TD	3.0	184	570	A8	2267	8.2	–	7.5	D	62		A
Limited	$58,000	V6	3.6	210	347	A8	2169	9.1	–	10.4	91	63		A
Limited CRD	$64,000	V6TD	3.0	184	570	A8	2281	8.2	–	7.5	D	63		A
Limited Hemi	$64,000	V8	5.7	259	520	A8	2302	8.7	–	13.0	91	63		A
Overland	$68,000	V6	3.6	210	347	A8	2169	9.1	–	10.4	91	58		A
Overland CRD	$74,000	V6TD	3.0	184	570	A8	2327	8.2	–	7.5	D	63		A
Overland Hemi	$74,000	V8	5.7	259	520	A8	2329	8.7	–	13.0	95	63	–	A
Summit Platinum	$78,000	V6TD	3.0	184	570	A8	–	8.2	–	7.5	D	63		A

Kia

7yr/unlimited km
www.kia.com.au

Rio — Sharp suit, neat dynamics

✅ Crisp styling; roomy interior; fun handling on twisty roads; direct-injection 1.6 is quick
❌ Dated 1.4-litre engine and outmoded four-speed auto; expensive; no manual with 1.6
• **The Pick:** Go for the Sport with a direct injection 1.6 GDI and more gear (but no manual!)

S 3dr	$15,990	L4	1.4	79	135	M6	1131	11.5	–	5.7	91	46	04/15	F
S 3dr	$17,990	L4	1.4	79	135	A4	1158	13.2	–	6.3	91	45	04/15	F
S 5dr	$16,990	L4	1.4	79	135	M6	1143	11.5	–	5.7	91	46		F
S 5dr	$18,990	L4	1.4	79	135	A4	1170	13.2	–	6.3	91	46		F
S Premium 5dr	$17,690	L4	1.4	79	135	M6	1143	11.5	–	5.7	91	47		F
S Premium 5dr	$19,690	L4	1.4	79	135	A4	1170	13.2	–	6.3	91	46		F
Sport 3dr	$21,490	L4	1.6	103	167	A6			–	6.1	91	47		F
SLi 5dr	$22,990	L4	1.6	103	167	A6	1215	10.3	–	6.1	91	48		F

Soul — More rhythm, less blues

✅ Second-gen Soul maintains the original's look; improved handling; individual appeal
❌ Engine crying out for a bottom-end; firm ride; uninvolving steering; so-so performance
• **The Pick:** We'd opt for an entry-level Skoda Yeti, though Soul II is way better than it used to be

Si	$26,990	L4	2.0	113	191	A6	1405	10.2		8.4	91	45	11/14	F

Cerato — A giant step forward for Kia

✅ Stylish and very roomy; ride/handling tuned for Australia; willing engines; good value
❌ Another feel-free Korean steering set-up; sloppy manual shift; not an enthusiast's car
• **The Pick:** Base S is the best value, and the 1.8-litre engine copes well enough

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
S sedan	$19,990	L4	1.8	110	178	M6	1287	9.3	–	6.6	91	50		F
S hatch	$19,990	L4	1.8	110	178	M6	1308	10.1	–	6.6	91	49		F
S sedan	$22,290	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1304	10.2	–	7.1	91	50	06/13	F
S hatch	$22,290	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1325	*9.7*	*16.9*	7.1	91	49	12/13	F
S Premium sedan	$24,990	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1304	10.2	–	7.1	91	51		F
S Premium hatch	$24,990	L4	1.8	110	178	A6	1325	*9.7*	*16.9*	7.1	91	51		F
Si sedan	$28,990	L4	2.0	129	209	A6	1319	9.0	–	7.4	91	52		F
Si hatch	$28,990	L4	2.0	129	209	A6	1339	9.3	–	7.4	91	52		F
SLi sedan	$31,990	L4	2.0	129	209	A6	1319	9.0	–	7.4	91	52		F
SLi hatch	$31,990	L4	2.0	129	209	A6	1339	9.3	–	7.4	91	52		F

Cerato Koup — Four-seat coupe bargain

✅ A proper four-seat coupe for peanuts; Turbo's torque; all-new Koup's all-round appeal
❌ Ride turns brittle on 18s; more a GT than a sports coupe; same cabin as regular Cerato
• **The Pick:** The Turbo manual mixes solid warm-hatch performance with coupe style

Si GDi	$24,190	L4	2.0	129	209	M6	1314	8.4	–	7.3	91	52		F
Si GDi	$26,490	L4	2.0	129	209	A6	1337	8.9	–	7.4	91	51		F
T-GDi Turbo	$28,190	L4T	1.6	150	265	M6	1370	7.7	–	7.7	91	52		F
T-GDi Turbo	$30,490	L4T	1.6	150	265	A6	1380	7.4	–	8.0	91	52		F
T-GDi Turbo Touring	$30,690	L4T	1.6	150	265	M6	1370	7.7	–	7.7	91	53		F
T-GDi Turbo Touring	$32,990	L4T	1.6	150	265	A6	1380	7.4	–	8.0	91	52		F

Pro_ceed — Like a Veloster, but better

✅ Grippy handling; cool styling; Recaro seats and great value define Kia's first hot hatch
❌ Torquey engine should sound better; rubbery gearshift; chassis gets ragged at its limit
• **The Pick:** With multi-link IRS, Kia's Euro-sourced hot hatch wins over Veloster or Koup

GT	$29,990	L4T	1.6	150	265	M6	1359	7.7	–	7.4	91	51		F
GT Tech	$34,990	L4T	1.6	150	265	M6	1359	*8.4*	*16.0*	7.4	91	52	04/14	F

Optima — Conservatively done (again)

✅ Cabin a huge step up; decent dynamics; rear-seat space; long warranty; equipment
❌ Small model range; firm ride on GT; heavy steering; 2.4 engine somewhat knackerless
• **The Pick:** Optima Si still an appliance, so save up and go for the turbocharged GT

Si	$34,490	L4	2.4	138	241	A6	1540	–	–	8.3	91			F
GT	$43,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A6	1605	–	–	8.3	91			F

Rondo — Second gen gets new family face

✅ Diesel torque, ride/handling balance on 16s and good packaging flexibility
❌ Petrol engine lacks torque; value not as good as original
• **The Pick:** Diesel Si – it costs more than the petrol but pays it back in luscious torque

Si	$30,240	L4	2.0	122	213	A6	1582	10.8	–	7.9	91	70	08/13	F
SLi	$34,240	L4	2.0	122	213	A6	1582	10.8	–	7.9	91	54		F
Platinum	$39,740	L4	2.0	122	213	A6	1582	10.8	–	7.9	91	70		F
Si Diesel	$32,990	L4TD	1.7	100	320	A6	1652	12.0	–	6.4	D	54		F
SLi Diesel	$36,990	L4TD	1.7	100	320	A6	1652	12.0	–	6.4	D	55		F

Carnival — Eight is enough

✅ Vastly more refined and better built than the old heap; eight seats; strong diesel; styling
❌ Still drives like a bus; thirsty V6; at 5.1m long, you'll need a McMansion to park it
• **The Pick:** A diesel Si, which adds sat-nav and a reversing camera over the base S

S	$41,490	V6	3.3	206	336	A6	2048	–	–	11.6	91	59		F
S CRDi	$43,990	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	2092	–	–	7.7	D	59		F
Si	$45,490	V6	3.3	206	336	A6	2048	–	–	11.6	91	59		F
Si CRDi	$47,990	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	2092	–	–	7.7	D	59		F
SLi	$49,990	V6	3.3	206	336	A6	2048	–	–	11.6	91	60		F
SLi CRDi	$52,490	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	2092	–	–	7.7	D	60		F
Platinum	$58,490	V6	3.3	206	336	A6	2048	–	–	11.6	91	61		F
Platinum CRDi	$60,990	L4TD	2.2	147	440	A6	2092	–	–	7.7	D	61		F

Sportage — Refreshed and improved

✅ Sharp looks; loaded cabin; torquey and thrifty turbo-diesel; nice handling balance
❌ Ride is a little stiff; seats okay but nothing special; petrol 2.0 tries hard but lacks muscle
• **The Pick:** Handles and steers so much better than it used to, while still looking funky-fresh

Si	$25,990	L4	2.0	122	205	M5	1482	–	–	8.7	91	52		F
Si	$28,190	L4	2.0	122	205	A6	1482	–	–	8.7	91	52		F
Si Premium	$29,990	L4	2.0	122	205	A6	1482	–	–	8.7	91	50		F
SLi	$34,990	L4	2.0	122	205	A6	1588	–	–	8.8	91	50		A
SLi	$37,990	L4TD	2.0	135	392	A6	1588	–	–	7.2	D	50		A
Platinum	$38,590	L4	2.0	122	205	A6	1588	–	–	9.2	91	50	08/14	A
Platinum	$41,590	L4TD	2.0	135	392	A6	1588	–	–	7.2	D	53	10/10	A

Sorento — Holiday, celebrate

✅ Diesel refinement; equipment; build quality; practicality; safety; handling; warranty
❌ Getting pricey for a Kia; badge snobbery means buyers may overlook this excellent SUV
• **The Pick:** SLi diesel gets a decent donk and plenty of kit, including leather and better audio

Si	$40,990	V6	3.3	199	318	A6	1921	–	–	9.9	91	54		F
Si	$44,490	L4TD	2.2	147	441	A6	2036	–	–	7.8	D	54		A
SLi	$45,990	V6	3.3	199	318	A6	1921	–	–	9.9	91	52		F
SLi	$49,490	L4TD	2.2	147	441	A6	2036	–	–	7.8	D	53		A
Platinum	$55,990	L4TD	2.2	147	441	A6	2036	*9.5*	*16.8*	7.8	D	54	09/15	A

NEW ARRIVALS
New models for the month highlighted

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	Recommended Retail Price at time of publication	L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T=turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid	Litres	Kilowatts	Newton metres	M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT	Kilograms	0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)	0-400m acceleration, in sec s, (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)	Fuel consumption in Litres/100km	Recommended octane rating	Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years	When we drove it	F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive
Touring hatch	$24,790	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1271	–	–	5.9	91	54		F
Touring hatch	$26,790	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1304	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Touring sedan	$24,790	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1266	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Touring sedan	$26,790	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1300	–	–	5.7	91	54		F
SP25 hatch	$25,190	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1308	*7.9*	*15.5*	6.5	91	54	11/14	F
SP25 hatch	$27,190	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1339	–	–	6.1	91	54		F
SP25 sedan	$25,190	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1302	–	–	6.5	91	54		F
SP25 sedan	$27,190	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1334	–	–	6.0	91	54		F
SP25 GT hatch	$29,790	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1325	–	–	6.5	91	56		F
SP25 GT hatch	$31,790	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1357	*7.9*	*15.7*	6.1	91	54	03/14	F
SP25 GT sedan	$29,790	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1320	–	–	6.5	91	56	03/14	F
SP25 GT sedan	$31,790	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1351	–	–	6.0	91	54		F
SP25 Astina hatch	$35,040	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1342	–	–	6.5	91	57		F
SP25 Astina hatch	$37,040	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1373	–	–	6.1	91	56		F
SP25 Astina sedan	$35,040	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1336	–	–	6.5	91	57		F
SP25 Astina sedan	$37,040	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1368	–	–	6.0	91	56		F
XD Astina hatch	$39,290	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	M6	1448	7.7	–	5	D	57	11/14	F
XD Astina hatch	$41,290	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1465	8.4	–	5	D	57		F

6 — Style and (subdued) sports

✅ Looks good and handles well; stunning diesel; great economy; vastly improved interior
❌ 19s spoil the ride a bit; shallow boot in sedan; dynamically not quite a match for Mondeo
• **The Pick:** A wagon – any of 'em – due to its smarter packaging and athletic style

Sport sedan	$32,540	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1462	8.2	–	6.6	91	55	03/13	F
Sport wagon	$33,840	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1484	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
Touring sedan	$37,280	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1471	*7.6*	*15.5*	6.6	91	54	02/15	F
Touring sedan	$40,480	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1541	8.4	–	5.4	D	54		F
Touring wagon	$38,580	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1494	*8.2*	*15.9*	6.6	91	50	04/14	F
Touring wagon	$41,780	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1561	8.4	–	5.4	D	50		F
GT sedan	$42,720	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1501	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
GT sedan	$45,920	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1571	8.4	–	5.4	D	50		F
GT wagon	$44,020	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1524	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
GT wagon	$47,220	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1591	*8.2*	*16.1*	8.4	D	50	07/15	F
Atenza sedan	$46,420	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1503	8.2	–	6.6	91	55	04/15	F
Atenza sedan	$49,620	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1573	8.4	–	5.4	D	55		F
Atenza wagon	$47,720	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1626	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
Atenza wagon	$50,920	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1594	8.5	–	6.0	D	55		F

MX-5 — Join the queue

✅ All-new MX-5 channels original NA's simplicity; great steering and grip; zippy 1.5
❌ No steering reach adjustment; engine note not as sweet and busier ride of the 2.0-litre
• **The Pick:** The big block's punch is tempting but 1.5 is the go, with a manual 'box

1.5 Roadster	$31,990	L4	1.5	96	150	M6	1009	8.3	–	6.1	95	64	09/15	R
1.5 Roadster	$33,990	L4	1.5	96	150	A6	1032	8.3	–	6.4	95	62		R
1.5 Roadster GT	$37,990	L4	1.5	96	150	M6	1009	8.3	–	6.1	95	65		R
1.5 Roadster GT	$39,990	L4	1.5	96	150	A6	1032	8.3	–	6.4	95	64		R
2.0 Roadster	$34,490	L4	2.0	118	200	M6	1033	7.3	–	6.9	95	64		R
2.0 Roadster	$36,490	L4	2.0	118	200	A6	1057	7.3	–	7.1	95	64		R
2.0 Roadster GT	$39,550	L4	2.0	118	200	M6	1033	7.3	–	6.9	95	65	09/15	R
2.0 Roadster GT	$41,550	L4	2.0	118	200	A6	1057	7.3	–	7.1	95	65		R

CX-3 — Big range, with sweet spots

✅ Striking styling; broad model range; AWD's balanced and involving chassis; cool factor
❌ Front-drive diesel misses the dynamic mark; noisy petrol engine; rear-seat side vision
• **The Pick:** Either an sTouring or Akari petrol manual, or one of the great-handling AWDs

Neo	$19,990	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1193	–	–	6.3	91	50		F
Neo	$21,990	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1226	–	–	6.1	91	50		F
Maxx	$22,390	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1193	–	–	6.3	91	52		F
Maxx	$24,390	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1226	–	–	6.1	91	50		F
Maxx Diesel	$26,790	L4TD	1.5	77	270	A6	1262	–	–	4.8	D	52	05/15	F
Maxx AWD	$26,390	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1294	–	–	6.7	91	52		A
sTouring	$26,990	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1193	–	–	6.3	91	52	05/15	F
sTouring	$28,990	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1226	*8.9*	*16.4*	6.1	91	52	05/15	F
sTouring AWD	$30,990	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1294	–	–	6.7	91	54		A
sTouring AWD Diesel	$33,390	L4TD	1.5	77	270	A6	1356	–	–	5.1	D	52		A
Akari	$31,290	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1219	–	–	6.3	91	54		F
Akari	$33,290	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1252	–	–	6.1	91	52		F
Akari AWD	$35,290	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1332	–	–	6.7	91	54	05/15	A
Akari AWD Diesel	$37,690	L4TD	1.5	77	270	A6	1368	–	–	5.1	D	54		A

CX-5 — Class-leading compact SUV

✅ Excellent dynamics (and not just for an SUV); well-packaged cabin; drivetrain efficiency
❌ 2.0 petrol needs revs to perform; no rear-seat air vents; steering freeze under load
• **The Pick:** Diesel Maxx Sport is one of the best compact SUVs on-sale in Australia

Maxx FWD	$27,190	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1443	–	–	6.4	91	57		F
Maxx FWD	$29,190	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1475	–	–	6.4	91	57		F
Maxx	$32,190	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1556	–	–	7.4	91	56		A
Maxx Sport FWD	$32,790	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1482	–	–	6.4	91	59		F
Maxx Sport	$35,790	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1559	*9.3*	*16.7*	7.4	91	57	08/14	A
Maxx Sport	$38,990	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1633	*8.0*	*15.8*	5.7	D	57	06/12	A
Grand Touring	$43,390	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1612	*8.4*	*16.0*	7.4	91	57	11/15	A
Grand Touring	$46,590	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1685	–	–	5.7	D	57	06/13	A
Akera	$47,410	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1614	–	–	7.4	91	57		A
Akera	$50,610	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1687	–	–	5.7	D	58	03/15	A

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive

CX-9 — Seven-seat SUV has extra room to zoom

✅ Disciplined handling; stacks of space, even in third row; silken drivetrain
❌ Sharp-edged imperfections jar through firm suspension and low-profile rubber
• **The Pick:** New $44K front-drive Classic has its eye on Territory and Kluger

Classic FWD	$43,770	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	1939	–	–	11.0	91	54		F
Luxury FWD	$52,080	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	1966	–	–	11.0	91	53	10/11	F
Luxury	$56,505	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	2070	*8.5*	*16.2*	11.3	91	56	04/08	A
Grand Touring	$61,680	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	2086	8.5	–	11.3	91	54		A

McLaren — 3yr/unlimited — cars.mclaren.com

650S — Even better than 12C

✅ Same brutal twin-turbo V8 as 12C, with supposedly even finer ride, handling and steering
❌ Arguably not as pretty as the 12C; we're yet to drive it locally but a road test is coming!
• **The Pick:** Always the coupe, for its purity and greater sporting focus

Coupe	$464,000	V8TT	3.8	478	678	S7	1330	3.0	10.5	11.7	98	61		R
Spider	$511,000	V8TT	3.8	478	678	S7	1370	3.0	10.5	11.7	98	61		R

Mercedes-Benz — 3yr/unlimited — www.mercedes-benz.com.au

A-Class — Baby Benz goes hipster

✅ Great driver (and youth) appeal; attention to detail; fiery A45 AMG; lots of equipment
❌ Tight rear seat; no manuals for Oz; more compliant ride still firm; prices creeping up
• **The Pick:** A250 Sport is terrific, though if you can stretch to the ballistic A45, do it!

A180	$37,200	L4T	1.6	90	200	S7	1320	8.6	–	5.8	95			F
A200	$42,800	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1320	7.8	–	6.1	95			F
A200d	$43,300	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1410	8.8	–	4.0	D			F
A250 Sport	$53,500	L4T	2.0	160	350	S7	1380	6.3	–	6.7	95			A
A45 AMG	$77,900	L4T	2.0	280	475	S7	1480	4.2	–	6.9	98		1/16	A

GLA-Class — City almost meets country

✅ Think of it as a slightly larger, comfier, more practical A-Class – we actually like it more
❌ Not a proper SUV by any means, with tight rear seat room; turbo-diesel a bit gruff
• **The Pick:** The GLA250 4matic is a superb jacked-up driver's hatch

GLA200d	$48,300	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1460	9.9	–	4.6	D	56	05/14	F
GLA250	$58,600	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1430	7.1	–	7.0	95	57		A
GLA45 AMG	$80,430	L4T	2.0	265	450	S7	1510	4.8	–	7.6	98	58	12/14	A

CLA-Class — A-Class grows a tail

✅ Frameless doors give it a coupe feel; uprated interiors of non-AMG CLAs; boot space
❌ Tight rear headroom; uncomfortable back seat; trim rattles; price premium over A-Class
• **The Pick:** CLA200 is pleasant, though 250 Sport is punchier, while AMG is mega-fun

CLA200	$50,900	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1355	8.5	–	5.7	95	58	12/13	F
CLA200 S-Brake	$52,400	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1385		–		95	58		F
CLA200d	$51,400	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1525	9.8	–	4.0	D	59		F
CLA200d S-Brake	$52,900	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1555		–		D	59		F
CLA250 Sport	$64,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1405	6.7	–	6.1	95	60		A
CLA250 Sport S-B	$66,400	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1435		–		95	60		A
CLA45 AMG	$88,400	L4T	2.0	265	450	S7	1510	*4.6*	*12.8*	7.0	98	60	07/14	A
CLA45 AMG S-Brake	$89,510	L4T	2.0	265	450	S7	1540	4.7	–		98	60	05/15	A

B-Class — Still not quite A-grade

✅ Spacious mini-MPV now with quality and class; competitive drivetrains; grippy 4matic
❌ Jiggly ride quality on standard run-flat tyres; slightly odd styling; uninspiring dynamics
• **The Pick:** A reasonable effort, but ride quality lets it down. Try a BMW 2 Active Tourer

B180	$41,400	L4T	1.6	90	200	S7	1425	9.1	–	5.5	95	49		F
B200	$47,400	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1425	8.6	–	5.5	95	50	06/12	F
B200d	$47,900	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1505	9.8	–	4.2	D	50	06/12	F
B250 4Matic	$54,200	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1505	6.7	–	6.8	95	51		A

C-Class — S-Class goes compact

✅ Aerodynamic style; punchy petrol engines; superb cabin; fine dynamics; stonking AMG
❌ Rear seat comfort not great; coil-sprung models don't ride like the Airmatic versions
• **The Pick:** C250 with optional Airmatic for practical types; either AMG for petrolheads

C200	$60,900	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1465	7.7	*15.4*	6.0	95	59	10/15	R
C200 Estate	$63,400	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1525	7.5	–	6.2	95	56		R
C200d	$62,400	L4TD	1.6	100	300	A7	1505	10.2	–	–	D	60		R
C200d Estate	$64,900	L4TD	1.6	100	300	A7	1580	10.6	–	–	D	56		R
C250	$68,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1480	*6.7*	*14.8*	6.0	95	60	12/14	R
C250 Estate	$71,400	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1545	6.8	–	6.9	95	56	10/14	R
C250d	$70,400	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1595	6.6	–	4.5	D	60		R
C250d Estate	$72,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1660	6.9	–	4.8	D	56		R
C300e	$74,900	L4TDH	2.1	150	500	A7	–	6.4	–	4.0	D	59		R
C63 AMG S	$154,510	V8TT	4.0	375	700	A7	1580	4.0	–	8.6	95	60	04/15	R
C63 AMG S Estate	$157,010	V8TT	4.0	375	700	A7	1650	4.1	–	8.7	95	60	10/15	R

C-Class Coupe — Style and substance

✅ Similar-to-sedan pricing; brilliant steering and ride quality; strong engines
❌ Not as pin-sharp in the bends as 4 Series Coupe; looks too much like a two-door sedan
• **The Pick:** C63 coupe is one of the truly great AMGs, but even the C180 is a sweetheart

C180	$59,900	L4T	1.6	115	250	A7	1505	8.5	–	6.3	95	61	01/12	R
C250	$70,900	L4T	1.8	150	310	A7	1550	7.2	–	6.9	95	60	08/11	R
C250d	$72,900	L4TD	2.2	150	500	A7	1660	*7.5*	*15.5*	5.1	D	61	05/14	R

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	RC	**Two-door with punch ... and a thirst**												
	✅ V8 sounds fantastic when pushed; nice chassis balance; styling has presence													
	❌ Heavy and thirsty for a sporty two-door; on-centre play in steering; interior lacks sparkle													
	• **The Pick:** 350 F-Sport – much of the F's performance and appearance without the price tag													
200t Luxury	$64,000	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1675	7.5	–	7.3	95			R
350 Luxury	$65,610	V6	3.5	233	378	A8	1680	6.1	–	9.4	95	56		R
200t F-Sport	$73,000	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1700	7.5	–	7.3	95			R
350 F-Sport	$73,610	V6	3.5	233	378	A8	–	6.1	–	9.4	95	56		R
200t Sports Luxury	$83,500	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1725	7.5	–	7.3	95			R
350 Sports Luxury	$85,610	V6	3.5	233	378	A8	1740	6.1	–	9.4	95	56		R
F	$133,110	V8	5.0	351	530	A8	1780	4.5	–	10.9	98	53		R
F Carbon	$147,110	V8	5.0	351	530	A8	1860	4.5	–	10.9	98	53		R
	ES	**Retiree's Lexus returns**												
	✅ Typical Lexus build quality combined with golf-bag-friendly boot and refined drivetrains													
	❌ Front-drive ES is the antithesis of the sporty IS and GS; smaller boot on hybrid													
	• **The Pick:** Either the IS or GS, or buy Australian-made and go for a Camry/Aurion													
300h Luxury	$60,500	L4H	2.5	151	213	C	1685	8.5	–	5.5	95	47	01/14	F
300h Sports Luxury	$69,500	L4H	2.5	151	213	C	1705	8.5	–	5.5	95	51		F
350 Luxury	$61,973	V6	3.5	204	346	A6	1630	7.4	–	9.5	95	51		F
350 Sports Luxury	$70,610	V6	3.5	204	346	A6	1665	7.4	–	9.5	95	51		F
	GS	**Pleasant, but outclassed**												
	✅ Slick new interior teams with superb drivetrains and much-improved dynamics													
	❌ Steering lifeless; handling one-dimensional and hobbled by intrusive ESC													
	• **The Pick:** 350 and 450h go hard, but highlight the chassis' limitations; 250 is sweet to drive													
200t Luxury	$75,000	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8		7.3	–	8.0	95			R
200t F-Sport	$83,000	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8		7.3	–	8.0	95			R
300h Luxury	$78,000	L4H	2.5	164	221	C	1820	–	–	5.2	95	46		R
300h F-Sport	$86,000	L4H	2.5	164	221	C	1820	–	–	5.2	95	46		R
350 F-Sport	$94,000	V6	3.5	233	378	A8	1740	6.3	–	9.7	95	46		R
350 Sports Luxury	$105,000	V6	3.5	233	378	A8	1740	6.0	–	9.7	95	46		R
450h F-Sport	$106,000	V6H	3.5	254	–	C	1910	5.9	–	6.3	95	46		R
450h Sports Luxury	$117,500	V6H	3.5	254	–	C	1910	5.9	–	6.3	95	46		R
	LS	**Smooth-sailing flagship**												
	✅ Mind-blowing tech; flawless fit and finish; eerily-quiet cabin; silky eight-speed auto													
	❌ Doesn't sound like a V8 until you get stuck into it; lacks personality													
	• **The Pick:** 600hL – uninspiring, but a 7 Series with this much kit would cost your first-born													
460 F-Sport	$182,610	V8	4.6	285	493	A8	2020	5.9	–	10.7	95	39		R
460 Sports Luxury	$187,610	V8	4.6	285	493	A8	2080	5.9	–	10.7	95	45		R
600h F-Sport	$210,110	V8H	5.0	290	520	A8	2340	5.7	–	8.6	95	42		R
600hL 4-seat	$250,610	V8H	5.0	290	520	A8			–	8.6	95	41		R
600hL 5-seat	$240,610	V8H	5.0	290	520	A8			–	8.6	95	41		R
	NX	**Goes better than it looks**												
	✅ Eye-catching (if polarising) design; quality interior; punchy turbo-petrol four-cylinder													
	❌ A 2005 RAV4 in drag, with packaging compromises; smaller than its rivals													
	• **The Pick:** New 2.0-litre turbo brings better performance, with F-Sport the sharpest													
200t Luxury	$52,500	L4T	2.0	175	350	A6	1700	7.3	–	7.7	95	54		F
300h Luxury	$55,000	L4H	2.5	147	210	C	1740	9.1	–	5.6	95	56		F
200t Luxury	$57,000	L4T	2.0	175	350	A6	1755	7.1	–	7.9	95	54		A
300h Luxury	$59,500	L4H	2.5	147	210	C	1800	9.1	–	5.7	95	56		A
200t F-Sport	$63,127	L4T	2.0	175	350	A6	1755	7.1	–	7.9	95	55		A
300h F-Sport	$66,000	L4H	2.5	147	210	C	1800	*8.9*	*16.4*	5.7	95	54	08/15	A
200t Sports Luxury	$72,110	L4T	2.0	175	350	A6	1860	7.1	–	7.9	95	53		A
300h Sports Luxury	$75,000	L4H	2.5	147	210	C	1895	9.1	–	5.7	95	55		A
	RX	**Edge of the wedge**												
	✅ Cabin space, particularly in the rear; ambience; presence; quality; sweet turbo four													
	❌ Steering lacks feel; handling lacks excitement; busy ride; part-time AWD; only five seats													
	• **The Pick:** Eager RX200t makes the most sense, and it's the most affordable													
200t	$73,000	L4T	2.0	175	350	A6	1890	9.2	–	8.1	95			F
350 Luxury	$80,000	V6	3.5	221	370	A8	1980	8.0	–	9.6	95			A
350 F-Sport	$92,000	V6	3.5	221	370	A8	1980	8.0	–	9.6	95			A
350 Sports Luxury	$98,000	V6	3.5	221	370	A8	1980	8.0	–	9.6	95			A
450h Luxury	$88,000	V6H	3.5	230	335	C	2105	7.7	–	5.7	95			A
450h F-Sport	$100,000	V6H	3.5	230	335	C	2105	7.7	–	5.7	95			A
450h Sports Luxury	$106,000	V6H	3.5	230	335	C	2105	7.7	–	5.7	95			A
	LX	**LandCruiser by Lexus**												
	✅ Clever suspension and crawl-control broaden LX's skill set; bigger V8 and six-speed auto													
	❌ Massive and truck-like to drive; gauche styling; no diesel option; expensive													
	• **The Pick:** A LandCruiser Sahara – better value, diesel engine and same off-road ability													
570	$140,500	V8	5.7	270	530	A8	2510	7.7	–	14.4	95			A
	Lotus	2yr/unlimited www.lotuscars.com.au												
	Elise	**Fast and fun, but wildly impractical**												
	✅ Cool looks; telepathic steering (at speed); suspension and brakes a joy (at speed)													
	❌ Cramped and noisy for day-to-day driving; definitely intended as a track-day weapon													
	• **The Pick:** If you live next to a racetrack, the S. If you want peace and quiet, look elsewhere													
	$74,990	L4	1.6	100	160	M6	876	6.5	–	6.3	91	64		R
Club Racer	$74,990	L4	1.6	100	160	M6	852	6.5	–	6.3	91	64		R
S	$84,990	L4S	1.8	163	250	M6	880	4.6	–	7.5	95	64		R
S Club Racer	$84,990	L4S	1.8	163	250	M6	880	4.6	–	7.5	95	64		R

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	Exige	**Race car for the road**												
	✅ Blown Toyota V6 gives the Exige the performance to match its brilliant handling													
	❌ Not for claustrophobes, or conservatives, or anyone into the tactility of interior plastics													
	• **The Pick:** Go the Roadster – it's a proper sports car and getting in with the roof down is easier													
S	$132,990	V6S	3.5	258	400	M6	1176	4.0	-	10.1	95	64		R
S	$137,990	V6S	3.5	258	400	A6	1182	3.9	-	10.1	95	64		R
S Roadster	$132,990	V6S	3.5	258	400	M6	1166	4.0	-	10.1	95	64		R
S Roadster	$137,990	V6S	3.5	258	400	A6	1172	3.9	-	10.1	95	64		R
	Evora	**Chassis smarts now with blown brawn**												
	✅ Exotic looks; individual appeal; one of the best chassis' on the planet													
	❌ Start ticking options and price can soar to $200K; a Porsche is a smarter bet													
	• **The Pick:** Brilliant dynamics, but $200K is second-hand Carrera S money...													
S	$152,990	V6S	3.5	258	400	M6	1437	4.8	–	9.1	95	64		R
S IPS	$161,990	V6S	3.5	258	400	A6	1491	5.0	–	9.7	95	64		R
	Maserati	3yr/unlimited www.maserati.com.au												
	Ghibli	**Look out, Germany!**												
	✅ Finally, a talented, beautiful and fast Italian alternative to the default German luxo sedans													
	❌ Heavy; misses out on active safety tech of German rivals; classic V8 sound is no longer													
	• **The Pick:** Surely the throaty Ghibli S, though the thrifty Diesel offers tempting value													
Diesel	$139,990	V6TD	3.0	202	600	A8	1835	6.3	–	5.9	D	48		R
	$143,900	V6TT	3.0	243	500	A8	1810	5.6	–	8.9	98	48		R
S	$169,900	V6TT	3.0	301	550	A8	1810	5.0	–	9.6	98	48		R
	Quattroporte	**Luxo style at its finest**												
	✅ Brilliant chassis balance; twin-turbo V6 a decent replacement for the previous V8													
	❌ New engines sound dull compared with throaty old V8; Chrysler cabin bits; ride flaws													
	• **The Pick:** GTS remains the pinnacle of Italian luxury motoring													
Turbo Diesel	$210,000	V6TD	3.0	202	600	A8	1885	6.4	–	6.2	D	50	10/14	R
	$215,000	V6TT	3.0	243	500	A8	1860	6.2	–	9.1	95			R
S	$240,000	V6TT	3.0	301	550	A8	1860	5.1	–	9.6	95	49	06/14	R
GTS	$331,000	V8TT	3.8	390	650	A8	1900	4.7	–	10.7	98	49	03/14	R
	GranTurismo	**The name says it all**												
	✅ Supremely capable grand tourer; useful rear-seat; oozes style and character													
	❌ Base version lacks dynamic resolve beyond eight-tenths and needs more grunt													
	• **The Pick:** Stradale blends Italian-supermodel flair with a soundtrack to die (or kill) for													
MC Sportline	$295,000	V8	4.7	338	520	A6	1880	4.8	–	14.3	95	48		R
MC Shift	$319,000	V8	4.7	338	520	A6	1880	4.7	–	14.5	95	48		R
MC Stradale	$345,000	V8	4.7	338	520	S6	1880	4.5	–	15.4	98	48		R
	GranCabrio	**Italian V8 symphony, amplified**												
	✅ Cloth lid doesn't add too much extra weight; glorious flood of V8 decibels with roof down													
	❌ Expensive and doesn't look great roof-up; dynamics still more cruiser than bruiser													
	• **The Pick:** An Italian supermodel with her top off? Hell, yeah...													
	$338,000	V8	4.7	323	490	A6	1980	4.8	–	15.2	95	50		R
Sport	$355,000	V8	4.7	331	510	S6	1980	4.7	–	14.5	95	50		R
MC	$355,000	V8	4.7	338	520	S6	1973	4.5	–	14.5	95	49		R
	Mazda	3yr/unlimited www.mazda.com.au												
	2	**The baby's all grown up...**												
	✅ Sensational manual gearshift; stunning engine tractability; classy dash; fun handling													
	❌ Steering should be sharper off-centre; road noise could be reduced; firm ride													
	• **The Pick:** Maxx manual hatch with red trim option and extra safety kit – a superb little car													
Neo hatch	$14,990	L4	1.5	79	139	M6	1025	–	–	5.4	91	51		F
Neo hatch	$16,990	L4	1.5	79	139	A6	1043	*10.7*	*17.5*	5.5	91	51	03/15	F
Neo sedan	$14,990	L4	1.5	79	139	M6	1035	–	–	5.4	91	51		F
Neo sedan	$16,990	L4	1.5	79	139	A6	1059	–	–	5.5	91	51	10/15	F
Maxx hatch	$17,690	L4	1.5	81	141	M6	1035	–	–	5.2	91	52		F
Maxx hatch	$19,690	L4	1.5	81	141	A6	1047	–	–	4.9	91	52		F
Maxx sedan	$17,690	L4	1.5	81	141	M6	1045	–	–	5.2	91	52		F
Maxx sedan	$19,690	L4	1.5	81	141	A6	1060	–	–	4.9	91	52		F
Genki hatch	$20,690	L4	1.5	81	141	M6	1035	–	–	5.2	91	54		F
Genki hatch	$22,690	L4	1.5	81	141	A6	1047	–	–	4.9	91	53	10/14	F
	3	**Popular appeal**												
	✅ Stylish and well-built; dynamics great when pushed to the limit; SP25's grunt and value													
	❌ Ride and refinement still can't match Golf; 2.0-litre lacks bottom-end torque													
	• **The Pick:** The SP25 GT manual – a fun, cool, sharp-handling, nicely kitted sporty hatch													
Neo hatch	$20,490	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1271	*9.2*	*16.5*	5.9	91	54	03/14	F
Neo hatch	$22,490	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1305	–	–	5.8	91	52		F
Neo sedan	$20,490	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1267	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Neo sedan	$22,490	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1301	–	–	5.7	91	52		F
Maxx hatch	$22,390	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1266	–	–	5.9	91	54		F
Maxx hatch	$24,390	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1300	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Maxx sedan	$22,390	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1262	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Maxx sedan	$24,390	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1296	–	–	5.7	91	54		F

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	Recommended Retail Price at time of publication	L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T= turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid	Litres	Kilowatts	Newton metres	M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT	Kilograms	0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)	0-400m acceleration, in sec s. (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)	Fuel consumption in Litres/100km	Recommended octane rating	Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years	When we drove it	F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive
Touring hatch	$24,790	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1271	–	–	5.9	91	54		F
Touring hatch	$26,790	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1304	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Touring sedan	$24,790	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1266	–	–	5.8	91	54		F
Touring sedan	$26,790	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1300	–	–	5.7	91	54		F
SP25 hatch	$25,190	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1308	*7.9*	*15.5*	6.5	91	54	11/14	F
SP25 hatch	$27,190	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1339	–	–	6.1	91	54		F
SP25 sedan	$25,190	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1302	–	–	6.5	91	54		F
SP25 sedan	$27,190	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1334	–	–	6.0	91	54		F
SP25 GT hatch	$29,790	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1325	–	–	6.5	91	56		F
SP25 GT hatch	$31,790	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1357	*7.9*	*15.7*	6.1	91	54	03/14	F
SP25 GT sedan	$29,790	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1320	–	–	6.5	91	56	03/14	F
SP25 GT sedan	$31,790	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1351	–	–	6.0	91	54		F
SP25 Astina hatch	$35,040	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1342	–	–	6.5	91	57		F
SP25 Astina hatch	$37,040	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1373	–	–	6.1	91	56		F
SP25 Astina sedan	$35,040	L4	2.5	138	250	M6	1336	–	–	6.5	91	57		F
SP25 Astina sedan	$37,040	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1368	–	–	6.0	91	56		F
XD Astina hatch	$39,290	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	M6	1448	7.7	–	5	D	57	11/14	F
XD Astina hatch	$41,290	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1465	8.4	–	5	D	57		F

6 — Style and (subdued) sports

✅ Looks good and handles well; stunning diesel; great economy; vastly improved interior
❌ 19s spoil the ride a bit; shallow boot in sedan; dynamically not quite a match for Mondeo
• **The Pick:** A wagon – any of 'em – due to its smarter packaging and athletic style

Sport sedan	$32,540	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1462	8.2	–	6.6	91	55	03/13	F
Sport wagon	$33,840	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1484	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
Touring sedan	$37,280	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1471	*7.6*	*15.5*	6.6	91	54	02/15	F
Touring sedan	$40,480	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1541	8.4	–	5.4	D	54		F
Touring wagon	$38,580	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1494	*8.2*	*15.9*	6.6	91	50	04/14	F
Touring wagon	$41,780	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1561	8.4	–	5.4	D	50		F
GT sedan	$42,720	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1501	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
GT sedan	$45,920	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1571	8.4	–	5.4	D	50		F
GT wagon	$44,020	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1524	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
GT wagon	$47,220	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1591	*8.2*	*16.1*	8.4	D	50	07/15	F
Atenza sedan	$46,420	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1503	8.2	–	6.6	91	55	04/15	F
Atenza sedan	$49,620	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1573	8.4	–	5.4	D	55		F
Atenza wagon	$47,720	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1626	8.2	–	6.6	91	55		F
Atenza wagon	$50,920	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1594	8.5	–	6.0	D	55		F

MX-5 — Join the queue

✅ All-new MX-5 channels original NA's simplicity; great steering and grip; zippy 1.5
❌ No steering reach adjustment; engine note not as sweet and busier ride of the 2.0-litre
• **The Pick:** The big block's punch is tempting but 1.5 is the go, with a manual 'box

1.5 Roadster	$31,990	L4	1.5	96	150	M6	1009	8.3	–	6.1	95	64	09/15	R
1.5 Roadster	$33,990	L4	1.5	96	150	A6	1032	8.3	–	6.4	95	62		R
1.5 Roadster GT	$37,990	L4	1.5	96	150	M6	1009	8.3	–	6.1	95	65		R
1.5 Roadster GT	$39,990	L4	1.5	96	150	A6	1032	8.3	–	6.4	95	64		R
2.0 Roadster	$34,490	L4	2.0	118	200	M6	1033	7.3	–	6.9	95	64		R
2.0 Roadster	$36,490	L4	2.0	118	200	A6	1057	7.3	–	7.1	95	64		R
2.0 Roadster GT	$39,550	L4	2.0	118	200	M6	1033	7.3	–	6.9	95	65	09/15	R
2.0 Roadster GT	$41,550	L4	2.0	118	200	A6	1057	7.3	–	7.1	95	65		R

CX-3 — Big range, with sweet spots

✅ Striking styling; broad model range; AWD's balanced and involving chassis; cool factor
❌ Front-drive diesel misses the dynamic mark; noisy petrol engine; rear-seat side vision
• **The Pick:** Either an sTouring or Akari petrol manual, or one of the great-handling AWDs

Neo	$19,990	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1193	–	–	6.3	91	50		F
Neo	$21,990	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1226	–	–	6.1	91	50		F
Maxx	$22,390	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1193	–	–	6.3	91	52		F
Maxx	$24,390	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1226	–	–	6.1	91	50		F
Maxx Diesel	$26,790	L4TD	1.5	77	270	A6	1262	–	–	4.8	D	52	05/15	F
Maxx AWD	$26,390	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1294	–	–	6.7	91	52		A
sTouring	$26,990	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1193	–	–	6.3	91	52	05/15	F
sTouring	$28,990	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1226	*8.9*	*16.4*	6.1	91	52	05/15	F
sTouring AWD	$30,990	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1294	–	–	6.7	91	54		A
sTouring AWD Diesel	$33,390	L4TD	1.5	77	270	A6	1356	–	–	5.1	D	52		A
Akari	$31,290	L4	2.0	109	192	M6	1219	–	–	6.3	91	54		F
Akari	$33,290	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1252	–	–	6.1	91	52		F
Akari AWD	$35,290	L4	2.0	109	192	A6	1332	–	–	6.7	91	54	05/15	A
Akari AWD Diesel	$37,690	L4TD	1.5	77	270	A6	1368	–	–	5.1	D	54		A

CX-5 — Class-leading compact SUV

✅ Excellent dynamics (and not just for an SUV); well-packaged cabin; drivetrain efficiency
❌ 2.0 petrol needs revs to perform; no rear-seat air vents; steering freeze under load
• **The Pick:** Diesel Maxx Sport is one of the best compact SUVs on-sale in Australia

Maxx FWD	$27,190	L4	2.0	114	200	M6	1443	–	–	6.4	91	57		F
Maxx FWD	$29,190	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1475	–	–	6.4	91	57		F
Maxx	$32,190	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1556	–	–	7.4	91	56		A
Maxx Sport FWD	$32,790	L4	2.0	114	200	A6	1482	–	–	6.4	91	59		F
Maxx Sport	$35,790	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1559	*9.3*	*16.7*	7.4	91	57	08/14	A
Maxx Sport	$38,990	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1633	*8.0*	*15.8*	5.7	D	57	06/12	A
Grand Touring	$43,390	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1612	*8.4*	*16.0*	7.4	91	57	11/15	A
Grand Touring	$46,590	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1685	–	–	5.7	D	57	06/13	A
Akera	$47,410	L4	2.5	138	250	A6	1614	–	–	7.4	91	57		A
Akera	$50,610	L4TTD	2.2	129	420	A6	1687	–	–	5.7	D	58	03/15	A

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive

CX-9 — Seven-seat SUV has extra room to zoom

✅ Disciplined handling; stacks of space, even in third row; silken drivetrain
❌ Sharp-edged imperfections jar through firm suspension and low-profile rubber
• **The Pick:** New $44K front-drive Classic has its eye on Territory and Kluger

Classic FWD	$43,770	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	1939	–	–	11.0	91	54		F
Luxury FWD	$52,080	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	1966	–	–	11.0	91	53	10/11	F
Luxury	$56,505	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	2070	*8.5*	*16.2*	11.3	91	56	04/08	A
Grand Touring	$61,680	V6	3.7	204	366	A6	2086	8.5	–	11.3	91	54		A

McLaren 3yr/unlimited cars.mclaren.com

650S — Even better than 12C

✅ Same brutal twin-turbo V8 as 12C, with supposedly even finer ride, handling and steering
❌ Arguably not as pretty as the 12C; we're yet to drive it locally but a road test is coming!
• **The Pick:** Always the coupe, for its purity and greater sporting focus

Coupe	$464,000	V8TT	3.8	478	678	S7	1330	3.0	10.5	11.7	98	61		R
Spider	$511,000	V8TT	3.8	478	678	S7	1370	3.0	10.5	11.7	98	61		R

Mercedes-Benz 3yr/unlimited www.mercedes-benz.com.au

A-Class — Baby Benz goes hipster

✅ Great driver (and youth) appeal; attention to detail; fiery A45 AMG; lots of equipment
❌ Tight rear seat; no manuals for Oz; more compliant ride still firm; prices creeping up
• **The Pick:** A250 Sport is terrific, though if you can stretch to the ballistic A45, do it!

A180	$37,200	L4T	1.6	90	200	S7	1320	8.6	–	5.8	95			F
A200	$42,800	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1320	7.8	–	6.1	95			F
A200d	$43,300	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1410	8.8	–	4.0	D			F
A250 Sport	$53,500	L4T	2.0	160	350	S7	1380	6.3	–	6.7	95			A
A45 AMG	$77,900	L4T	2.0	280	475	S7	1480	4.2	–	6.9	98		1/16	A

GLA-Class — City almost meets country

✅ Think of it as a slightly larger, comfier, more practical A-Class – we actually like it more
❌ Not a proper SUV by any means, with tight rear seat room; turbo-diesel a bit gruff
• **The Pick:** The GLA250 4matic is a superb jacked-up driver's hatch

GLA200d	$48,300	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1460	9.9	–	4.6	D	56	05/14	F
GLA250	$58,600	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1430	7.1	–	7.0	95	57		A
GLA45 AMG	$80,430	L4T	2.0	265	450	S7	1510	4.8	–	7.6	98	58	12/14	A

CLA-Class — A-Class grows a tail

✅ Frameless doors give it a coupe feel; uprated interiors of non-AMG CLAs; boot space
❌ Tight rear headroom; uncomfortable back seat; trim rattles; price premium over A-Class
• **The Pick:** CLA200 is pleasant, though 250 Sport is punchier, while AMG is mega-fun

CLA200	$50,900	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1355	8.5	–	5.7	95	58	12/13	F
CLA200 S-Brake	$52,400	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1385		–		95	58		F
CLA200d	$51,400	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1525	9.8	–	4.0	D	59		F
CLA200d S-Brake	$52,900	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1555		–		D	59		F
CLA250 Sport	$64,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1405	6.7	–	6.1	95	60		A
CLA250 Sport S-B	$66,400	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1435		–		95	60		A
CLA45 AMG	$88,400	L4T	2.0	265	450	S7	1510	*4.6*	*12.8*	7.0	98	60	07/14	A
CLA45 AMG S-Brake	$89,510	L4T	2.0	265	450	S7	1540	4.7	–		98	60	05/15	A

B-Class — Still not quite A-grade

✅ Spacious mini-MPV now with quality and class; competitive drivetrains; grippy 4matic
❌ Jiggly ride quality on standard run-flat tyres; slightly odd styling; uninspiring dynamics
• **The Pick:** A reasonable effort, but ride quality lets it down. Try a BMW 2 Active Tourer

B180	$41,400	L4T	1.6	90	200	S7	1425	9.1	–	5.5	95	49		F
B200	$47,400	L4T	1.6	115	250	S7	1425	8.6	–	5.5	95	50	06/12	F
B200d	$47,900	L4TD	2.1	100	300	S7	1505	9.8	–	4.2	D	50	06/12	F
B250 4Matic	$54,200	L4T	2.0	155	350	S7	1505	6.7	–	6.8	95	51		A

C-Class — S-Class goes compact

✅ Aerodynamic style; punchy petrol engines; superb cabin; fine dynamics; stonking AMG
❌ Rear seat comfort not great; coil-sprung models don't ride like the Airmatic versions
• **The Pick:** C250 with optional Airmatic for practical types; either AMG for petrolheads

C200	$60,900	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1465	7.7	*15.4*	6.0	95	59	10/15	R
C200 Estate	$63,400	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1525	7.5	–	6.2	95	56		R
C200d	$62,400	L4TD	1.6	100	300	A7	1505	10.2	–	–	D	60		R
C200d Estate	$64,900	L4TD	1.6	100	300	A7	1580	10.6	–	–	D	56		R
C250	$68,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1480	*6.7*	*14.8*	6.0	95	60	12/14	R
C250 Estate	$71,400	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1545	6.8	–	6.9	95	56	10/14	R
C250d	$70,400	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1595	6.6	–	4.5	D	60		R
C250d Estate	$72,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1660	6.9	–	4.8	D	56		R
C300e	$74,900	L4TDH	2.1	150	500	A7	–	6.4	–	4.0	D	59		R
C63 AMG S	$154,510	V8TT	4.0	375	700	A7	1580	4.0	–	8.6	95	60	04/15	R
C63 AMG S Estate	$157,010	V8TT	4.0	375	700	A7	1650	4.1	–	8.7	95	60	10/15	R

C-Class Coupe — Style and substance

✅ Similar-to-sedan pricing; brilliant steering and ride quality; strong engines
❌ Not as pin-sharp in the bends as 4 Series Coupe; looks too much like a two-door sedan
• **The Pick:** C63 coupe is one of the truly great AMGs, but even the C180 is a sweetheart

C180	$59,900	L4T	1.6	115	250	A7	1505	8.5	–	6.3	95	61	01/12	R
C250	$70,900	L4T	1.8	150	310	A7	1550	7.2	–	6.9	95	60	08/11	R
C250d	$72,900	L4TD	2.2	150	500	A7	1660	*7.5*	*15.5*	5.1	D	61	05/14	R

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
C350	$99,040	V6	3.5	225	370	A7		6.0	–	7.9	95	61		R
C63	$159,110	V8	6.2	373	610	A7	1730	*4.1*	*12.1*	12.1	98	60	09/14	R

SLK — Roadster lets its hair down

✓ Cruisy character remains, but with lovely new direct injection V6 and frugal V8
✗ Clumsy transmission and abrupt ESC are out of sync; poor ride
• **The Pick:** SLK200 is a simple, sweet around-town tool; AMG only works on racetracks

SLK200	$87,200	L4T	1.8	135	270	M6	1435	7.3	–	6.8	95	51		R
SLK200	$87,200	L4T	1.8	135	270	A7	1470	7.0	–	6.9	95	51	05/11	R
SLK250	$96,500	L4T	1.8	150	310	A7	1500	6.6	–	7.0	95	52		R
SLK350	$125,400	V6	3.5	225	370	A7	1540	5.6	–	8.3	95	51	01/12	R
SLK55 AMG	$162,400	V8	5.5	310	540	A7	1610	*4.6*	*12.6*	8.5	98	51	10/12	R

E-Class — More than just a new set of hips

✓ Mild facelift hides lots of new tech, including brilliant E300 Hybrid and supersonic E63 S
✗ E500 discontinued, as is E63 wagon; twin-turbo V6 is hugely effective, but it's still no V8
• **The Pick:** E300 Hybrid is tomorrow's sedan, today; E63 S is an old-school hot-rod

E200	$80,400	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1580	8.2	–	6.4	95	48		R
E200 Estate	$87,900	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1660	8.3	–	6.7	95	53		R
E220d	$82,900	L4TD	2.1	125	400	A7	1660	8.4	–	4.9	D	48		R
E250	$96,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1605	7.4	–	6.4	95	48		R
E250d	$99,400	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1700	7.5	–	4.9	D	48		R
E250d Estate	$107,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1810	7.8	–	5.1	D	53		R
E300e	$109,400	L4TDH	2.1	150	500	A7	1845	7.5	–	4.3	D	48	09/13	R
E400	$129,040	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1710	5.3	–	7.6	95	48		R
E400 Estate	$138,510	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1810	5.4	–	8.0	95	53		R
E63 AMG S	$250,540	V8TT	5.5	430	800	A7	1795	*4.3*	*12.2*	10.0	98	48	09/13	R

E-Class Coupe — Revamped and refined

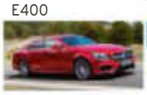
✓ New E200 entry coupe means you can now get into a two-door E-class for under $80K
✗ Built for touring, not apex hunting; manual transmission availability would be nice
• **The Pick:** All are sophisticated grand tourers, but we like the E400 and its twin-turbo V6

E200	$80,900	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1540	7.8	–	6.0	95	48		R
E250	$97,700	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1560	7.1	–	6.0	95	48		R
E250d	$99,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1660	7.3	–	4.7	D	53		R
E400	$130,510	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1650	5.2	–	7.5	95	53		R

E-Class Cabrio — E-Class's lid lopped

✓ Airscarf- and Aircap-equipped for top-down winter warmth; terrific top-up refinement
✗ No rip-snorting V8 in the line-up any more; it's a Benz for cruisers, not drivers
• **The Pick:** As in the Coupe, the E400 is hard to go past if you like convertibles

E200	$89,900	L4T	2.0	135	300	A7	1660	8.2	–	6.5	95	53		R
E250	$107,700	L4T	2.0	155	350	A7	1690	7.5	–	6.5	95	53		R
E400	$144,510	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1770	5.3	–	7.7	95	53		R



CLS — Still the most credible four-door coupe

✓ Still-pretty looks; lovely cabin; brilliant steering and Airmatic ride (even on CLS63 AMG)
✗ Petrol V6 can't match the oiler; CLS63 AMG will never return 10L/100km; only seats four
• **The Pick:** 350 CDI over an A7 3.0 TDI; storming AMG a coin-toss away from Jaguar XFR

CLS 250d	$114,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1710	7.5	–	5.4	D	44		R
CLS 250d S-Brake	$124,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A7	1790	7.8	–	5.6	D	44		R
CLS400	$139,510	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1815		–	7.8	95	46		R
CLS500	$169,510	V8TT	4.7	300	600	A9	1815		–	6.8	95	46		R
CLS500 S-Brake	$179,510	V8TT	4.7	300	600	A9	1815		–	8.9	95	46		R
CLS63 AMG S	$249,510	V8TT	5.5	430	800	A7	1795	*4.3*	*12.2*	10.0	98	43	10/14	R

S-Class — Arguably the world's best sedan

✓ Incredible combination of agility, ride comfort and silence; superb seats; keen steering
✗ Some trim combinations are putrid – money can't buy taste; expensive
• **The Pick:** The SWB S500 with 20-inch wheels because the brilliant ride still works

S300e	$196,500	L4TDH	2.1	150	500	A7	2015	7.6		4.5	D	48	08/14	R
S350d	$216,700	V6TD	3.0	190	620	A7	1880	6.8	–	6.0	D	48	02/14	R
S350d L	$224,200	V6TD	3.0	190	620	A7	1900	6.8	–	6.0	D	48		R
S400 L	$230,910	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1920	5.3	–	7.9	95	50		R
S500	$286,210	V8TT	4.7	335	700	A7	1920	4.8	–	9.2	95	45	02/14	R
S500L	$311,410	V8TT	4.7	335	700	A7	1940	4.8	–	9.2	95	45	09/13	R
S600 L	$417,110	V8TT	6.0	390	830	A7	2110	4.6	–	11.3	98	46		R
S600 Maybach	$448,610	V12TT	6.0	390	830	A7	2260	5.0	–	11.7	98	45		R
S63 AMG	$386,910	V8TT	5.5	430	900	A7	1970	4.0	–	10.2	98	55	11/13	R
S63 AMG L	$399,610	V8TT	5.5	430	900	A7	2095	4.5	–	10.2	98	45		R
S65 AMG L	$489,610	V12TT	6.0	463	1000	A7	2175	4.3	–	11.9	98	45		R

S-Class Coupe — Two-door German *powerhaus*

✓ New generation gets big lift in interior presentation; nine-speed debut for base V8
✗ Pricing, plus the cost of rear tyres, and probably insurance; and is the V12 worth it?
• **The Pick:** New twin-turbo V8s promise better economy with still-brilliant performance

S500	$318,610	V8TT	4.7	335	700	A9	1955	4.6	–	8.6	95	64		R
S63 AMG	$408,610	V8TT	5.5	430	900	A7	1995	4.2	–	10.2	98	53		R
S65 AMG	$498,610	V12TT	6.0	463	1000	A7	2110	4.1	–	12.0	98	48		R

SL — Sports luxury, maybe. Not light

✓ Updated SL scores a twin-turbo V6, joining an existing suite of superb engines
✗ Looks odd from some angles; it's still heavy, thirsty, and not exactly dynamic
• **The Pick:** Deploy the 900Nm SL63 or 1000Nm SL65 for the full SL effect

SL400	$228,610	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	1685		–	7.8	95	49		R
SL500	$311,610	V8TT	4.7	320	700	A7	1785	4.6	–	9.4	95	48	10/12	R
SL63 AMG	$398,610	V8TT	5.5	430	900	A7	1856	4.3	–	10.2	98	49		R
SL65 AMG	$480,610	V12TT	6.0	463	1000	A7	1950	4.0	–	11.7	98	49		R

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive

AMG GT — All grand, more sport than tourer

✓ Brilliant new twin-turbo V8; fantastic sound; arresting styling; cohesive chassis; drama
✗ Some ergonomic issues inside cabin; Australia won't see the more affordable base GT
• **The Pick:** Well, there's only one of them, and it's a shedload better than the polarising SLS

GT S	$294,610	V8TT	4.0	375	650	A7	1495	3.8	–	9.4	98	67	09/15	R

GLC-Class — Million-dollar baby

✓ Styling; outstanding interior; passenger and luggage space; decent off-road ability
✗ 250d not as sweet as lazier 220d; handling and steering not as crisp as C-Class
• **The Pick:** Great refinement and relaxed nature of price leading 220d makes it a winner

GLC220d	$64,500	L4TD	2.1	125	400	A9	1845	8.3	–	5.6	D			A
GLC250	$67,900	L4T	2.0	155	350	A9	1735	7.3	–	7.2	95			A
GLC250d	$69,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A9	1845	7.6	–	5.7	D			A

GLE-Class — New name, familiar body

✓ Superb V6 diesel; premium cabin; decent ride quality; frugal for its size; beefy AMG V8
✗ Can't escape its sheer size; not particularly well packaged; still far from sexy
• **The Pick:** Feels more expensive than it is, with the GLE400 arguably the sweet spot

GLE250d	$86,900	L4TD	2.1	150	500	A9	2075	8.6	–	6.0	D			A
GLE350d	$104,900	V6TD	3.0	190	620	A9	2100	7.1	–	6.6	D			A
GLE400	$109,900	V6TT	3.0	245	480	A7	2055	6.1	–	9.3	95			A
GLE500	$127,900	V8TT	4.7	300	600	A7	2160	5.3	–	11.0	95			A
GLE63 S AMG	$189,900	V8TT	5.5	430	760	A7	2270	4.2	–	11.8	98			A

GLE Coupe — Merc's answer to the X6

✓ Vision; excellent cornering grip; refinement; decent room despite lower-than-GLE roof
✗ Thousands more than GLE for less space; busy ride; high loading lip for boot
• **The Pick:** AMG-tweaked turbo six in the new 450 makes a great noise and feels strong

GLE350d	$121,900	V6TD	3.0	190	620	A9	2175	7.0	–	7.2	D			A
GLE450 AMG	$141,900	V6TT	3.0	270	520	A9	2145	5.7	–	9.4	95			A
GLE63 S AMG	$198,900	V8TT	5.5	430	760	A7	2275	4.2	–	11.9	98			A

G-Class — Army truck for the road

✓ Tough-as image; AMG's ultra-cool side tailpipes and burly new twin-turbo V8 donk
✗ G-Class BlueTec name is paradoxical; live *front* axle; woeful steering; bucking ride
• **The Pick:** The outrageous AMG has perverse appeal, but only the diesel makes any sense

G350d	$150,610	V6TD	3.0	155	540	A7	2300	9.1	–	11.2	D	50		A
G500	$167,510	V8	5.5	285	530	A7	2530	6.1	–	14.9	98	50		A
G63 AMG	$233,910	V8TT	5.5	400	760	A7	2550	5.4	–	13.8	98	50	05/14	A

GL-Class — Stands for Goliath

✓ Third-row seat actually comfortable and almost roomy; big load capacity;engines
✗ Gargantuan Class, more like it – it's bloody huge and not easy to thread through the city
• **The Pick:** The torquey diesel V6 is sensible; the twin-turbo AMG is seductive

GL350d	$114,900	V6TD	3.0	190	620	A7	2455	7.9	–	7.7	D	58	04/13	A
GL500	$159,500	V8TT	4.7	320	700	A7	2455	5.4	–	11.5	95	56		A
GL63 AMG	$214,900	V8TT	5.5	410	760	A7	2580	4.9	–	12.3	98	54	07/13	A

Valente — Budget big Benz

✓ A cheaper way to get into an eight-seat Benz (and out of a VW Multivan or Tarago)
✗ Like the new-gen V-Class, it's essentially a commercial van with seats
• **The Pick:** This over its VW Multivan and Toyota Tarago rivals

	$56,380	L4TD	2.1	120	360	A7	2155	–	–	6.3	D	66		R

V-Class — New name, new cabin, new engine

✓ Enormously roomy, complete with limo-style, face-to-face rear seating; frugal diesel four
✗ Sheer size makes it difficult to manoeuvre and park, which kinda defeats its purpose
• **The Pick:** A centre captain's chair in a fully stocked V250 with Jeeves in the hot seat

V250d	$85,500	L4TD	2.1	140	440	A7	2145	9.1	–	6.3	D	53		R

Mini 3yr/unlimited www.mini.com.au

Hatch — Best Mini ever

✓ Brilliant handling and super-sharp turn-in; Cooper S's great acoustics; improved cabin
✗ Bottom-feeder front end; thicker pillars; three-pot should sound fruitier
• **The Pick:** The excellent Cooper S manual on 17s with optional adaptive dampers

One	$24,950	L3T	1.2	75	180	M6	1090	9.9	–	4.9	95	58		F
One	$26,850	L3T	1.2	75	180	A6	1120	10.2	–	5.0	95	58		F
Cooper	$26,650	L3T	1.5	100	220	M6	1085	7.9	–	4.7	95	59	06/14	F
Cooper	$30,100	L3T	1.5	100	220	A6	1115	7.8	–	4.9	95	61		F
Cooper D	$31,800	L3TD	1.5	85	270	M6	1135	9.2	–	3.7	D	58		F
Cooper D	$34,150	L3TD	1.5	85	270	A6	1150	9.2	–	3.9	D	61		F
Cooper S	$36,950	L4T	2.0	141	280	M6	1160	6.8	–	5.9	95	57	06/14	F
Cooper S	$39,300	L4T	2.0	141	280	A6	1175	6.7	–	5.5	95	57		F
JCW	$47,400	L4T	2.0	170	320	M6	1205	6.3	–	6.7	95	63		F
JCW	$49,950	L4T	2.0	170	320	A6	1220	6.1	–	5.7	95	63		F

5-door — Mini attempts a high-five

✓ Longer wheelbase and additional rear doors broaden the Mini's family-hatch appeal
✗ Betrays the Mini's DNA; rear doors look piddly; isn't this what a Countryman is for?
• **The Pick:** A Cooper or Cooper D auto with the smallest wheels. The S doesn't deserve this

One	$26,050	L3T	1.2	75	180	M6	–	–	–	5.0	95	61		F
Cooper	$27,750	L3T	1.5	100	220	M6	1145	8.2	–	4.7	95	61		F
Cooper	$30,400	L3T	1.5	100	220	A6	1175	*9.1*	*16.5*	4.8	95	61	03/16	F
Cooper D	$32,900	L3TD	1.5	85	270	M6	1190	9.4	–	3.6	D	61		F
Cooper D	$35,550	L3TD	1.5	85	270	A6	1205	9.5	–	3.8	D	61		F
Cooper S	$38,050	L4T	2.0	141	280	M6	1220	6.9	–	5.9	95	62		F
Cooper S	$40,700	L4T	2.0	141	280	A6	1240	6.8	–	5.4	95	62		F

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T=turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in sec s (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

Cooper Cabrio — Fabric and function

✅ Neat fabric folding-roof mechanism; still drives like a Mini
❌ Premium over the hard-top is excessive; unavoidable reduction in body rigidity
• **The Pick:** Base is too sluggish for the money – go the Cooper S or JCW

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$40,350	L4	1.6	90	160	M6	1165	9.8	–	6.1	95	56		F
Highgate	$44,250	L4	1.6	90	160	M6	1205	9.8	–	6.1	95	56		F
S	$48,800	L4T	1.6	135	240	M6	1165	7.3	–	6.4	95	57		F
S Highgate	$52,200	L4T	1.6	135	240	M6	1230	7.7	–	6.4	95	57		F
JCW	$58,500	L4T	1.6	155	260	M6	1240	6.9	–	7.2	95	58		F

Clubman — Grown-up go-kart

✅ Quirky styling; spacious interior; zingy engines; still handles like a go-kart; lots of doors
❌ Firm ride; artificial steering; interior lacks the polish of German-badged rivals
• **The Pick:** Three-pot base Clubman is a ripper but the more frenetic S delivers

Cooper	$34,900	L3T	1.5	100	220	M6	1300	9.1	–	5.4	95			F
Cooper	$34,900	L3T	1.5	100	220	A6	1320	9.1	–	5.4	95			F
Cooper S	$42,900	L4T	2.0	141	280	M6	1360	7.2	–	6.3	95			F
Cooper S	$42,900	L4T	2.0	141	280	A8	1390	7.1	–	5.9	95			F
Cooper JCW	$51,800	L4T	1.6	155	280	M6	1205	6.8	–	7.0	95	57		F

Countryman — A large-Mini paradox

✅ Plenty of driving fizz and Mini character in a more practical SUV-ish body
❌ Needs a 2.0-litre, or more boost, to deal with the extra weight
• **The Pick:** A fine drive, but the (more conservative) VW Tiguan is a smarter choice

	$34,150	L4	1.6	90	160	M6	1265	10.5	–	6.5	95	58		F
	$37,155	L4	1.6	90	160	A6	1295	10.5	–	6.5	95	59		F
D	$36,950	L4TD	1.6	82	270	M6	1310	10.9	–	4.4	D	58		F
D	$39,300	L4TD	2.0	82	270	A6	1335	11.3	–	5.6	D	58		F
S	$42,550	L4T	1.6	135	240	M6	1310	7.6	–	6.6	95	59	01/12	F
S	$50,555	L4T	1.6	135	240	A6	1335	7.9	–	7.5	95	59		F
S ALL4	$45,500	L4T	1.6	135	240	M6	1380	7.6	–	7.3	95	60		A
S ALL4	$47,555	L4T	1.6	135	240	A6	1405	8.2	15.9	8.1	95	60	06/11	A
SD ALL4	$46,990	L4TD	2.0	105	305	M6	1395	9.4	–	4.9	D	60		A
JCW ALL4	$56,900	L4T	1.6	160	280	M6	1405	7.0	–	8.0	98	60		A

Ageing less than gracefully

THE basic shape appeared in 2007, but that hasn't stopped Mitsubishi tweaking and tizzying its ageing Lancer small car over the years.

Visual changes for this latest update to the naturally aspirated range are centred around the nose, with a new bumper and grille(s) modernising it slightly. Equipment upgrades include fitment of a rear camera, digital radio and daytime running lights on all models.

Pricing is still the main appeal for non-Evo Lancers, while the 2.4-litre GSR adds some sporty touches, but not the Evo's dynamic talent.

Paceman — Not just a Countryman coupe

✅ Sharp dynamics; cabin improvements; rear-seat space; uniqueness
❌ $2K extra for fewer doors; Aussies miss out on fuel-saving tech; tardy base models
• **The Pick:** Take the Paceman S. More fun and worth the extra dosh

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$34,150	L4	1.6	90	160	M6	1255	10.4	–	6.5	95	56		F
	$37,205	L4	1.6	90	160	A6	1275	10.8	–	6.5	95	55	10/13	F
S	$42,550	L4T	1.6	140	240	M6	1380	7.5	–	6.6	95	55		F
S	$44,900	L4T	1.6	140	240	A6	1405	7.8	–	7.5	95	55		F
JCW	$56,900	L4T	1.6	165	280	M6	1475	6.9	–	8.0	95	55	09/13	A
JCW	$59,250	L4T	1.6	160	280	A6	1495	6.9	–	8.3	95	55		A

Mitsubishi

5yr/130,000km
www.mitsubishi-motors.com.au

Mirage — Cheap, cheerless mini

✅ Better-equipped than you'd expect at the price; long warranty; should be reliable
❌ Leisurely pace; bouncy ride; tight rear seat; hideous sedan styling
• **The Pick:** The base ES manual at a bargain price. Or better still, a second-hand Mazda 2

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
ES	$11,990	L3	1.2	57	100	M5	865	–	–	4.6	91	42	04/13	F
ES	$13,490	L3	1.2	57	100	C	890	–	–	4.6	91	42		F
ES sedan	$14,490	L3	1.2	57	100	M5	925	–	–	4.9	91	44		F
ES sedan	$16,490	L3	1.2	57	100	C	940	14.5	19.6	4.9	91	43	10/14	F
LS	$12,990	L3	1.2	57	100	M5	865	–	–	4.8	91	44		F
LS	$14,990	L3	1.2	57	100	C	890	–	–	4.9	91	44		F
LS sedan	$17,490	L3	1.2	57	100	C	940	–	–	4.9	91	44		F

Lancer — Value or Evo – they're poles apart

✅ Neat styling; decent value; Evo's go-kart handling, adjustability and rally reputation
❌ Lots! Non-Evo dynamics are rubbish; cheap interior; poor front seats; drony CVT...
• **The Pick:** A competitor – even a Korean one. Or the Evo Final Edition if you're nostalgic

ES Sport	$19,500	L4	2.0	110	197	M5	1285	9.6	–	6.9	91	62		F
ES Sport	$21,000	L4	2.0	110	197	C	1315	10.3	–	7.4	91	63		F
LS sedan	$23,500	L4	2.0	110	197	C	1355	10.5	–	7.4	91	61		F
GSR Sportback	$22,500	L4	2.4	125	226	M5	1370			8.8	91	56		F
GSR Sportback	$24,000	L4	2.4	125	226	C	1400			8.9	91	56		F
GSR sedan	$22,500	L4	2.4	125	226	M5	1345	9.1	–	8.8	91	56		F
GSR sedan	$24,000	L4	2.4	125	226	C	1375	9.8	–	8.5	91	56		F
Ralliart sedan	$37,990	L4T	2.0	177	343	S6	1480			9.6	98	56	01/09	A
Evolution sedan	$52,990	L4T	2.0	217	366	M5	1490	6.3	14.4	10.2	98	63	08/08	A
Evolution Final Ed'	$53,700	L4T	2.0	217	366	M5	1490	–	–	10.2	98	64		A
Evolution MR sedan	$58,990	L4T	2.0	217	366	S6	1520	5.7	14.0	10.1	98	62	12/13	A

ASX — Prettier, but still loud

✅ Exterior styling keeps aimproving with age; keen pricing; torquey turbo-diesel
❌ Interior smaller than SUV rivals; lacks refinement; Peugeot 4008 clone handles better
• **The Pick:** 2WD is cheap, although we'd prefer to step up to a 4WD diesel

LS	$24,990	L4	2.0	110	197	M5	1335	–	–	7.6	91	48		F
L25026,990	L4	2.0	110	197	C		–	–		91	48		F	
XLS	$31,490	L4	2.0	110	197	C	1375	–	–	7.4	91	49		F
LS 4x4	$31,490	L4TD	2.2	110	360	A6	–	–	–	5.8	D	46	09/13	A
XLS 4x4	$35,990	L4TD	2.2	110	360	A6	1515	–	–	5.8	D	48	09/13	A

Outlander — You got seven seats in that?

✅ A compact-ish SUV that squeezes in seven seats; quieter and smoother; equipment
❌ Crappo infotainment functionality; about as American as a facelift can get
• **The Pick:** Either a base LS manual or an XLS 4WD turbo-diesel with six-speed auto

LS	$28,490	L4	2.0	110	190	M5	1410	–	–	7.0	91	48		F
LS	$30,490	L4	2.0	110	190	C	1430	–	–	6.7	91	48		F
LS 4WD	$33,490	L4	2.4	124	220	C	1500	–	–	7.2	91	52		A
XLS	$33,490	L4	2.0	110	190	C	1430	–	–	6.7	91	48		F
XLS 4WD	$36,490	L4	2.4	124	220	C	1535	11.0	17.9	7.2	91	50	06/15	A
XLS 4WD DiD	$39,490	L4TD	2.3	110	360	A6	1630	–	–	6.2	D	50		A
Exceed 4WD	$43,490	L4	2.4	124	220	C	1535	–	–	7.2	91	51		A
Exceed 4WD DiD	$46,490	L4TD	2.3	110	360	A6	1630	–	–	6.2	D	51		A
PHEV	$47,490	L4H	2.0	149	195	A1	1810	–	–	1.9	91	47		A
PHEV Aspire	$52,490	L4H	2.0	149	195	A1	1871	–	–	1.9	91	47		A

Pajero Sport — From Challenger to challenging

✅ Clever on-demand 4WD system; more gear ratios than any rival; rugged
❌ Strictly a five-seater; old-school Triton chassis hurts dynamics; gobsmacking styling
• **The Pick:** Base GLX offers plenty for the money, but Toyota Fortuner is much prettier

GLX	$45,000	L4TD	2.5	133	430	A8	2045	–	–	8.0	D			A
GLS	$48,500	L4TD	2.5	133	430	A8	2060	–	–	8.0	D			A
Exceed	$52,750	L4TD	2.5	133	430	A8	2070	–	–	8.0	D			A

Pajero — Mitsu's staple family workhorse

✅ Tough family transporter is also a proper off-roader; undercuts serious 4WD rivals
❌ Feels old (it is) and creaky; noisy diesel; ponderous dynamics; heavy
• **The Pick:** The thrifty diesel, but unless you venture off-road often, think Territory or CX-9

GLX	$50,990	L4TD	3.2	147	441	M5	2273	–	–	8.4	D	51		A
GLX	$53,990	L4TD	3.2	147	441	A5	2263	–	–	8.6	D	51		A
GLS	$58,990	L4TD	3.2	147	441	A5	2314	–	–	8.6	D	51		A
Exceed	$65,990	L4TD	3.2	147	441	A5	2335	–	–	9.2	D	57		A

Morgan

2yr/100,000km
www.morgancars.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
3 Wheeler	As weird as it gets													
☑ It's a good way to stand out; there's nothing else like it; character personified ☒ It's a good way to get laughed at; thirsty; lacking useful features like a windscreen... • **The Pick:** Something with four wheels, unless you have a really big garage														
	$97,500	V2	2.0	60	140	M5	550	6.0	–	9.3	95	61		R
Classic	A synonym for 'old-gen'													
☑ Fabulously raw and lightweight roadsters; relatively affordable ☒ Forget about cabin ergonomics or ride quality; definitely not practical • **The Pick:** This or a Caterham if your house backs onto a racetrack														
R4/4	$95,800	L4	1.6	82	131	M6	868	8.0	–	6.3	95	67		R
Plus 4	$106,500	L4	2.0	115	201	M6	877	7.5	–	7.0	95	61		R
Roadster	$143,000	V6	3.7	209	352	M6	950	5.5	–	9.8	95	67		R
Plus 8	$254,000	V8	4.8	270	490	M6	1100	4.5	–	12.1	95	50		R
Plus 8	$254,000	V8	4.8	270	490	A6	1100	4.5	–	12.1	95	50		R

Nissan

3yr/100,000km
www.nissan.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Micra	Still without Europe's boosted triple													
☑ Keenly-priced and well-kitted; revvy 1.2-litre triple; styling is ageing with dignity ☒ Tinny, basic and unrefined compared with larger light hatches; ST's poor tyres • **The Pick:** Base ST manual. Or a second-hand Mazda 2 Genki if you're being really sensible														
ST	$13,490	L3	1.2	56	104	M5	943	*13.2*	*18.8*	5.9	91	41	06/15	F
ST	$15,290	L3	1.2	56	104	A4	956	–	–	6.5	91	41		F
Ti	$16,990	L3	1.2	56	104	A4	969	–	–	6.5	91	48		F
Pulsar	Pulsar revived, but not the N14's spirit													
☑ Vast cabin; big boot; keen pricing; revives a once-loved name; should be reliable ☒ Dull styling; no folding backrest; light steering; flaccid dynamics; mediocre performance • **The Pick:** Something else – Mazda 3 and Corolla smashed Pulsar in a *Wheels* comparo														
ST hatch	$19,990	L4	1.8	96	174	M6	1208	–	–	7.2	91	48		F
ST hatch	$22,240	L4	1.8	96	174	C	–	–	–	6.7	91	47		F
ST sedan	$19,990	L4	1.8	96	174	M6	–	–	–	7.2	91	47	06/13	F
ST sedan	$22,290	L4	1.8	96	174	C	–	–	–	6.7	91	46		F
ST-L hatch	$20,990	L4	1.8	96	174	M6	1230	–	–	7.2	91	48		F
ST-L hatch	$23,240	L4	1.8	96	174	C	–	–	–	6.7	91	47		F
ST-L sedan	$22,490	L4	1.8	96	174	M6	–	–	–	7.2	91	48		F
ST-L sedan	$24,790	L4	1.8	96	174	C	–	–	–	6.7	91	47		F
SSS hatch	$25,990	L4T	1.6	140	240	M6	1304	–	–	7.7	95	50	08/13	F
SSS hatch	$28,490	L4T	1.6	140	240	C	–	–	–	7.8	95	49		F
SSS sedan	$26,990	L4T	1.6	140	240	M6	–	–	–	7.8	95	48		F
SSS sedan	$29,290	L4T	1.6	140	240	C	–	–	–	7.8	95	48		F
Altima	Maxima be gone													
☑ Impressively punchy and refined four-pot/CVT combo; well-equipped; roomy; cheap-ish ☒ V6 is too much for Altima's front-end to handle; terminal understeer; rental-car styling • **The Pick:** ST-L has a sweet drivetrain, plenty of kit and better wheels than the dowdy ST														
ST	$29,990	L4	2.5	127	230	C	1435	–	–	7.5	91	37	01/14	F
ST-L	$35,990	L4	2.5	127	230	C	1451	–	–	7.5	91	38		F
Ti	$40,490	L4	2.5	127	230	C	1467	–	–	7.5	91	39		F
Ti-S	$45,490	V6	3.5	183	312	C	1536	–	–	9.3	91	39		F
Leaf	Drive-away electric													
☑ Purpose-built electric, with loads of torque; supremely smooth; classy, techy interior ☒ Regenerative braking, steering and handling all a bit weird-burger and/or artificial • **The Pick:** Um, the Leaf – especially at its current $39,990 driveaway price														
	$39,990	E		80	280	A1	1525	11.9	–			45	09/11	F
370Z	Nissan's cut-price Cayman													
☑ Fast and sharp; big-hearted V6; sweetly balanced; trick auto-blip manual on downshifts ☒ Engine still coarse; manual shift a tad clunky; ride quality on rough roads • **The Pick:** It's no son-of-Godzilla, but a tyre fryin' hoot on smooth hotmix														
	$56,930	V6	3.7	245	363	M6	1471	5.6	*13.8*	10.5	95	64	06/09	R
	$59,930	V6	3.7	245	363	A7	1485	5.7	*13.8*	10.5	95	64	12/09	R
370Z Roadster	... and Nissan's cut-price Boxster													
☑ Same virtues as the coupe, but the V6 should sound sweeter top-down ☒ 137kg extra weight is like having a *Biggest Loser* contestant on board, all of the time • **The Pick:** Auto is slick and intuitive, but we'd still opt for the manual														
	$65,930	V6	3.7	245	363	M6	1608	–	–	11.2	95	61	01/10	R
	$68,930	V6	3.7	245	363	A7	1618	–	–	11.2	95	61		R
GT-R	Godzilla: the third season													
☑ Cutting-edge tech delivers supercar pace and dynamics, mixed with user-friendliness ☒ Very firm ride over rough urban tarmac; dual-clutch 'box is clunky at low speeds • **The Pick:** Base Premium gets all the grunt and all-paw ability														
Premium	$172,000	V6TT	3.8	404	628	S6	1740	*3.2*	*11.2*	11.7	98	53	12/13	A
Luxury	$177,000	V6TT	3.8	404	628	S6	1740	–	–	11.7	98	53		A
Black Edition	$182,500	V6TT	3.8	404	628	S6	1740	–	–	11.7	98	53		A

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Juke	Still a head-turner													
☑ Brings individuality to small crossovers; punchy 140kW turbo; chirpy new ST manual ☒ Busy urban ride; noisy CVT; heavy Ti-S AWD; styling a compilation, but no best-of • **The Pick:** Ti-S with torque-vectoring AWD is a wannabe Godzilla, but go the 1.2 turbo ST														
ST	$23,490	L4T	1.2	85	190	M5	1163	–	–	5.6	95	50	06/13	F
ST	$24,490	L4	1.6	86	158	C	1205	–	–	6.3	95	52		F
Ti-S	$29,790	L4T	1.6	140	240	M6	1300	–	–	6.0	95	50		F
Ti-S	$33,490	L4T	1.6	140	240	C	1431	–	–	6.5	95	52		A

Qashqai	Dualis takes a back seat with new model													
☑ Clever packaging combined with a sharp price; handles like a jumped-up hatchback ☒ Performance not its forte, though both engines try hard; no rear-seat air vents • **The Pick:** Base petrol ST with CVT auto, even if it misses out on the clever boot partitions														
ST	$25,850	L4	2.0	106	200	M6	1372	9.9	–	7.7	91	50		F
ST	$28,490	L4	2.0	106	200	C	1408	10.1	–	6.9	91	50	09/14	F
Ti	$32,890	L4	2.0	106	200	M6	1421	9.9	–	7.7	91	54		F
Ti	$34,990	L4	2.0	106	200	C	1457	10.1	–	6.9	91	54		F
TS	$33,590	L4TD	1.6	96	320	C	1556	11.1	–	4.9	D	52		F
TL	$38,390	L4TD	1.6	96	320	C	1605	11.1	–	4.9	D	52	09/14	F

X-Trail	Latest model a huge improvement													
☑ Less gawky looks; extra stretch adds third-row option; quiet, luxurious and roomy ☒ Some trim still feels cheap; foot-operated park brake; ultimately lacking in finesse • **The Pick:** Sharp pricing on the front-drive ST auto looks the goods														
ST	$27,990	L4	2.0	106	200	M6	1437	–	–	8.2	91	52		F
ST	$30,490	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1470	–	–	7.9	91	52		F
ST 7-seat	$31,580	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1516	–	–	8.1	91	50		F
ST 4WD	$33,980	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1526	–	–	8.3	91	52		A
ST-L	$36,590	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1487	–	–	7.9	91	52		F
ST-L 7-seat	$37,590	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1533	–	–	8.1	91	52		F
ST-L 4WD	$39,490	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1543	*10.3*	*17.4*	8.3	91	50	08/14	A
Ti 4WD	$45,190	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1574	–	–	8.3	91	51		A
TS	$35,380	L4TD	1.6	96	320	C	–	–	–	5.3	D	44		F
TS 4WD	$35,680	L4TD	1.6	96	320	M6	–	–	–	5.3	D	45		A
TL	$46,280	L4TD	1.6	96	320	C	–	–	–	5.3	D	47		F
TL 4WD	$46,580	L4TD	1.6	96	320	M6	–	–	–	5.3	D	47		A

Murano	Sci-fi styled SUV													
☑ Looks more 'sport' than 'utility vehicle'; roomy and comfortable interior; stacked with kit ☒ Improved handling, but understeer is still the default setting; lifeless steering • **The Pick:** ST is good value, if you're after a big, comfy, reliable Labrador of a family car														
ST	$48,990	V6	3.5	191	336	C	1822	8.0	–	10.9	95	44	05/09	A
Ti	$60,240	V6	3.5	191	336	C	1850	8.0	–	10.9	95	44	02/10	A

Pathfinder	Less bush, more city													
☑ No longer a wagon version of a separate-chassis ute; big seven-seat interior; smooth V6 ☒ 2WD version is front-drive; appalling steering; no diesel; designed for middle America • **The Pick:** Value-packed ST 4WD blends on-road grip with room for seven, plus luggage														
ST 2WD	$39,990	V6	3.5	190	325	C	1920	–	–	9.9	91	58		R
ST 4WD	$44,290	V6	3.5	190	325	C	1985	–	–	10.2	91	54		A
ST Hybrid	$42,990	L4HS	2.5	188	330	C	1969	–	–	8.4		54		F
ST-L 2WD	$50,490	V6	3.5	190	325	C	1960	–	–	9.9	91	53	01/14	R
ST-L 4WD	$54,490	V6	3.5	190	325	C	2025	–	–	10.2	91	54		A
ST-L Hybrid	$57,490	L4HS	2.5	188	330	C	2073	*8.0*	*16.0*	8.5		54	09/15	A
Ti 2WD	$60,990	V6	3.5	190	325	C	2000	–	–	9.9	91	54		R
Ti 4WD	$65,090	V6	3.5	190	325	C	2065	–	–	10.2	91	54		A
Ti Hybrid	$68,090	L4HS	2.5	188	330	C	2073	–	–	8.5		55		A

Y61 Patrol	Hectares of 4WD for the money													
☑ Huge, roomy and oh-so-tough, as you'd expect with a Patrol; looks great covered in dirt ☒ Weight; dynamics; stuff-youse-all image when used in cities; almost as big as the QEII • **The Pick:** You'll feel like King of the Rodeo in an ST 3.0 manual, but she's very agricultural														
DX 3.0	$53,890	L4TD	3.0	118	380	M5	2372	–	–	10.9	D	51		A
ST 3.0	$57,390	L4TD	3.0	118	380	M5	2483	–	–	10.9	D	50		A
ST Titanium	$57,390	L4TD	3.0	118	380	M5	2483	–	–	10.9	D	51		A

Y62 Patrol	My dear, how you've blossomed													
☑ Posh V8 Patrol has graduated from Uni and is living in the eastern suburbs ☒ At 2.8 tonnes, it's the heaviest 'car' on sale in Australia; V8 loves a binge drink • **The Pick:** Base Ti over the ancient Y61 (see above). But is this really necessary?														
Ti	$69,990	V8	5.6	298	560	A7	2800	–	–	14.5	95	53		A
Ti-L	$86,990	V8	5.6	298	560	A7	2829	–	–	14.5	95	54		A

Peugeot

3yr/100,000km
www.peugeot.com.au

208	Pretty, well-priced													
☑ Charming three-pot turbo; sharper value and extra gear; plush seats; GTi great to drive ☒ Lacks a 308's polish and panache; polarising driving position; no turbo-triple manual • **The Pick:** Three-pot turbo makes plenty of sense below $20K in the Access auto														
Access	$15,990	L3	1.2	60	118	M5	975	13.9	–	4.5	95			F
Access	$18,990	L3T	1.2	81	205	A6	1070	10.9	–	4.5	95			F
Active	$21,990	L3T	1.2	81	205	A6	1070	10.9	–	4.5	95			F
Allure	$25,990	L3T	1.2	81	205	A6	1070	10.9	–	4.5	95			F
GT-Line	$27,490	L3T	1.2	81	205	A6	1070	*11.0*	*17.6*	4.5	95		03/16	F
GTi	$30,990	L4T	1.6	153	300	M6	1160	6.8	–	5.4	95			F

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T= turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C= CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in sec s, (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

2008 — Return to French form

✅ Terrific three-pot; supple ride; adjustable handling; great packaging; commendably light
❌ Auto is an ancient four-speed; diesel is grumbly and expensive; instrument location
• **The Pick:** The lovable three-pot 1.2, or wait for the brilliant turbo version due shortly

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
1.2 Active	$22,490	L3	1.2	60	118	M5	1022	13.5	–	4.9	95	50	12/13	F
1.6 Active	$25,490	L4	1.6	88	160	A4	1113	11.2	–	6.5	95	53		F
1.6 Allure	$30,990	L4	1.6	88	160	A4	1113	11.2	–	6.5	95	52		F
1.6 e-HDi Outdoor	$32,990	L4TD	1.6	68	230	M5	1131	11.5	–	4.0	D	54		F

308 — Best Pug this century

✅ Smart styling; entry-level triple is a belter; terrific dynamics; well equipped for the money
❌ Torsion-beam rear can be felt at times; ride suffers on big wheels; costs more than a Golf
• **The Pick:** The 1.2 turbo triple is a rip-snorter, even as an auto, and so is the diesel wagon

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Access	$21,990	L3T	1.2	96	230	M6	1090	*9.3*	*16.5*	4.6	95	48	04/15	F
Access	$23,990	L3T	1.2	96	230	A6	1150	9.1	–	5.1	95	48		F
Active	$28,340	L3T	1.2	96	230	A6	1150	9.1	–	5.1	95	50	12/14	F
Allure	$32,790	L4T	1.6	110	240	A6	1255	8.5	–	6.5	95	50		F
Allure HDi	$35,290	L4TD	2.0	110	370	A6	1310	8.6	–	4.1	D	51		F
Allure Premium	$36,440	L4T	1.6	110	240	A6	1255	8.5		6.5	95	51		F
Allure Premium HDi	$38,940	L4TD	2.0	110	370	A6	1310	8.6	–		D	51		F
Allure Touring	$35,490	L4T	1.6	110	240	A6			–	6.5	95	51	05/15	F
Allure Touring HDi	$37,990	L4TD	2.0	110	370	A6	1420	8.9	–	4.2	D	51		F
Allure Touring Prem	$39,140	L4T	1.6	110	240	A6			–	6.5	95	51		F
Allure T Prem HDi	$41,640	L4TD	2.0	110	370	A6			–		D	51		F
GT	$41,990	L4T	1.6	151	285	M6	1200	7.5	–	5.6	95	54	05/15	F
GT BlueHDi	$42,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A6	1320	8.4	–	4.0	D	54	05/15	F
GTi 250	$44,990	L4T	1.6	184	330	M6	1205	6.2	–	6.0	95			F
GTi 270	$49,990	L4T	1.6	200	330	M6	1205	6.0	–	6.0	95			F

3008 — Compact, yet versatile Frenchie

✅ Quirky-looking compact SUV of sorts; stylish, flexible interior; solid drivetrains
❌ No manuals; steering and ride far from class-leading; invisible image; not pretty
• **The Pick:** Lightly updated and freshly specced, the 3008 is far from a stand-out Peugeot

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Active Turbo	$35,490	L4T	1.6	115	240	A6	1480	9.5	–	7.7	95	48		F
Active HDi	$38,990	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	1539	10.2	–	6.6	D	48		F

308 CC — Style, of sorts, over substance

✅ Fairly glam to look at, with a slick interior; impressive diesel and six-speed auto
❌ It's expensive, heavy and lacks any notion of sportiness
• **The Pick:** Surely an Audi A3 Cabriolet instead of this hangover from last decade

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Allure	$52,990	L4T	1.6	115	240	A6	1533	9.8	–	7.7	95	49		F

508 — Mid-size for non-conformists

✅ Price and equipment; roomy, quality interior; GT's punch and capable dynamics
❌ Regular models lack the handling of the GT; all lack the serene ride of Peugeots past
• **The Pick:** GT HDi is semi-sporting and a valid premium-Japanese alternative

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Active	$37,990	L4T	1.6	121	240	A6	1410	8.9	–	5.6	95	48		F
Allure HDi	$44,990	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	1520	9.2	–	5.4	D	50		F
Allure HDi Touring	$47,990	L4TD	2.0	120	340	A6	1540	9.5	–	5.5	D	50		F
GT HDi	$59,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A6	1540	8.6	–	4.4	D	51		F
GT HDi Touring	$62,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A6	1676	8.6	–	4.6	D	51		F

RCZ — Peugeot rediscovers styling

✅ As voluptuous as a Parisian waitress; sharp handling and great balance of manual 1.6T
❌ Petrol turbo could use more grunt; diesel a questionable mismatch for this coupe role
• **The Pick:** Turbo petrol manual is great fun and value, as is the ballsy RCZ-R

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$58,990	L4T	1.6	147	275	M6	1372	7.5	–	6.9	95	47	02/11	F
	$58,990	L4T	1.6	115	240	A6	1372	8.4	–	7.3	95	47	02/11	F
HDi	$58,990	L4TD	2.0	120	340	M6	1445	8.2	–	5.3	D	47	11/10	F
R	$68,990	L4T	1.6	199	330	M6	1280	*6.5*	*14.3*	6.3	95	51	06/15	F

4008 — Mitsubishi ASX puts on a beret

✅ Improved styling and suspension damping over the Mitsubishi ASX on which it's based
❌ Steering and handling; refinement; plasticky Mitsu' interior; not remotely French
• **The Pick:** A better-looking ASX, but lacks the dynamics of a Qashqai or Subaru XV

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Active FWD	$27,990	L4	2.0	110	197	M5		–	–	7.7	95	54		F
Active AWD	$30,990	L4	2.0	110	197	M5	1440	–	–	7.9	95	54	08/12	A
Active AWD	$33,490	L4	2.0	110	197	C	1470	10.9	–	8.1	95	51		A
Allure AWD	$38,490	L4	2.0	110	197	C	1470	10.9	–	8.1	95	51	08/12	A

Porsche

3yr/unlimited
www.porsche.com.au

Boxster — One of the world's best cars

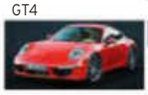
✅ Superb balance, engines, looks and interior – new Boxster rates almost a perfect 10
❌ As with 911, electric parking brake and electric steering won't please the purists
• **The Pick:** Any of them – base is creamy, lovely; the S is harder, edgier

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$104,700	F6	2.7	195	280	M6	1310	5.8	–	8.2	98	57		R
	$109,690	F6	2.7	195	280	S7	1340	5.7	–	7.7	98	57	05/12	R
S	$131,100	F6	3.4	232	360	M6	1320	5.1	–	8.8	98	57	05/12	R
S	$136,090	F6	3.4	232	360	S7	1350	*4.7*	*12.9*	8.0	98	57	11/13	R
GTS	$148,200	F6	3.4	243	370	M6	1345	5.0	–	9.0	98	57		R
GTS	$154,490	F6	3.4	243	370	S7	1375	4.9	–	8.2	98	57		R
Spyder	$168,600	F6	3.8	276	420	M6	1315	4.5		9.9	98	57		R

Cayman — One of the world's best Porsches

✅ Even more of a driver's car than the brilliant Boxster, and arguably a match for the 911
❌ Power and torque deliberately held back to leave room for Porsche's 911 flagship
• **The Pick:** A manual – great as PDK is, *nothing* is better than a Porsche manual gearshift

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$106,200	F6	2.7	202	290	M6	1310	5.7	–	8.2	98	57	06/12	R
	$111,190	F6	2.7	202	290	S7	1340	5.6	*13.7*	7.7	98	57	10/13	R
S	$139,000	F6	3.4	239	370	M6	1320	5.0	–	8.8	98	57		R
S	$143,990	F6	3.4	239	370	S7	1350	4.9	–	8.0	98	57		R
GTS	$160,500	F6	3.4	250	380	M6	1345	4.9	–	9.0	98	57		R
GTS	$166,790	F6	3.4	250	380	S7	1375	4.8	–	8.2	98	57	07/14	R
GT4	$189,900	F6	3.8	283	420	M6	1340	4.4		10.3	98	57	05/15	R



911 — Pushes supercar boundaries

✅ Potent performance and dynamic depth; practical as a daily driver; it's Porsche's icon
❌ That electric parking brake is a sign of the times, and the electric steering masks some feel
• **The Pick:** Any, but Carrera S with Sport Chrono. Impossible to go wrong with a car this right

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Carrera	$208,200	F6	3.4	257	390	M7	1380	4.8	–	9.0	98	57		R
Carrera	$214,150	F6	3.4	257	390	S7	1400	4.6	–	8.2	98	57		R
Carrera S	$244,800	F6	3.8	294	440	M7	1395	*4.6*	*12.6*	9.5	98	57	10/13	R
Carrera S	$250,750	F6	3.8	297	440	S7	1415	*4.2*	*12.2*	8.7	98	57	06/12	R
Carrera GTS	$268,300	F6	3.8	316	440	M7	1425	4.4	–	9.5	98	57		R
Carrera GTS	$275,690	F6	3.8	316	440	S7	1445	4.0	–	8.7	98	57		R
Carrera Cabriolet	$229,500	F6	3.4	257	390	M7	1525	5.0	–	9.2	98	57		R
Carrera Cabriolet	$235,450	F6	3.4	257	390	S7	1525	5.0	–	9.3	98	57		R
Carrera S Cabriolet	$266,800	F6	3.8	294	440	M7	1540	4.7	–	9.7	98	57	05/12	R
Carrera S Cabriolet	$272,750	F6	3.8	297	440	S7	1540	4.7	–	9.7	98	57		R
Carrera GTS Cab'	$289,300	F6	3.8	316	440	M7	1495	4.6	–	9.7	98	57		R
Carrera GTS Cab'	$296,690	F6	3.8	316	440	S7	1515	4.2	–	8.9	98	57		R
Carrera 4	$223,900	F6	3.4	257	390	M7	1505	4.9	–	9.5	98	57		A
Carrera 4	$229,850	F6	3.4	257	390	S7	1505	4.9	–	9.5	98	57		A
Carrera 4S	$260,500	F6	3.8	294	440	M7	1520	4.5	–	10	98	57		A
Carrera 4S	$266,450	F6	3.8	297	440	S7	1540	4.5	–	10	98	57		A
Carrera 4 GTS	$283,700	F6	3.8	316	440	M7	1470	4.4		9.9	98	57		A
Carrera 4 GTS	$291,090	F6	3.8	316	440	S7	1490	4.0		9.1	98	57		A
Carrera 4 Cabriolet	$245,200	F6	3.4	257	390	M7	1575	5.1	–	9.5	98	57		A
Carrera 4 Cabriolet	$251,150	F6	3.4	257	390	S7	1575	5.1	–	10	98	57		A
Carrera 4S Cabriolet	$282,500	F6	3.8	294	440	M7	1535	4.7	–	10.0	98	57		A
Carrera 4S Cabriolet	$288,450	F6	3.8	294	440	S7	1555	4.3	–	9.2	98	57		A
Carrera 4 GTS Cab	$304,900	F6	3.8	316	440	M7	1540	4.6	–	10.0	98	57		A
Carrera 4 GTS Cab	$312,290	F6	3.8	316	440	S7	1560	4.2	–	9.2	98	57		A
Carrera Targa 4	$249,600	F6	3.4	257	390	M7	1540	5.2	–	9.5	98	57		A
Carrera Targa 4	$255,550	F6	3.4	257	390	S7	1560	4.8	–	8.7	98	57		A
Carrera Targa 4S	$286,800	F6	3.8	294	440	M7	1555	4.8	–	10.0	98	57		A
Carrera Targa 4S	$292,750	F6	3.8	294	440	S7	1575	4.4	–	9.2	98	57		A
Carrera Targa 4 GTS	$304,900	F6	3.8	316	440	M7	1560	4.7	–	10.0	98	57		A
Carrera Targa 4 GTS	$312,290	F6	3.8	316	440	S7	1580	4.3	–	9.2	98	57		A
GT3	$293,200	F6	3.8	350	440	S7	1430	3.5	–	12.4	98	57		R
GT3 RS	$387,300	F6	4.0	368	460	S7	1420	3.3	–	12.7	98	57		R
Turbo	$366,100	F6TT	3.8	383	710	S7	1595	3.2	–	9.7	98	57		A
Turbo Cabriolet	$396,000	F6TT	3.8	383	710	S7	1665	3.3	–	9.9	98	57		A
Turbo S	$444,500	F6TT	3.8	412	750	S7	1605	*3.1*	*11.1*	9.7	98	57	03/14	A
Turbo S Cabriolet	$466,500	F6TT	3.8	412	750	S7	1675	3.2	–	9.9	98	57		A

Panamera — More booty than the Kardashians

✅ Razor-sharp dynamics for a big 'un; honking twin-turbo V8; delightful rear-drive manuals
❌ Ride is far from cosseting; only seats four; feels massive; too much junk in its trunk
• **The Pick:** The 4S mixes a quick and creamy V8 with the best dynamics of the bunch

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	$204,200	V6	3.6	228	400	S7	1760	6.3	–	8.4	98	57		R
Diesel	$208,400	V6TD	3.0	221	650	A8	1900	6.0	–	6.4	D	57		R
4	$216,400	V6	3.6	228	400	S7	1820	6.1	–	8.7	98	57		A
S	$288,900	V8	4.8	309	520	S7	1810	5.1	–	8.7	98	57		R
S E-Hybrid	$285,300	V6H	3.0	306	590	S7	2095	5.5	–	3.1	98	57		R
4S	$300,700	V6TT	3.0	309	520	S7	1870	4.8	–	8.9	98	57		A
GTS	$319,700	V8	4.8	316	520	S7	1920	4.5	–	10.7	98	57		A
Turbo	$383,000	V8TT	4.8	382	700	S7	1970	4.1	–	10.2	98	57		A
Turbo S	$444,200	V8TT	4.8	419	750	S7	1995	3.8	–	10.2	98	57		A

Macan — For them poorer folk

✅ Stuttgart's smallest tractor is also its cheapest; not a clone of its Audi Q5 cousin
❌ Hefty twin-turbo V6 power lost on a high-riding SUV; sports pedigree is marketing spin
• **The Pick:** The diesel, as the V6 talks the torquey talk without attempting the sporty walk

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
S Diesel	$88,000	V6T	3.0	190	580	S7	1880	6.3	–	6.3	D	63	08/14	A
S	$89,300	V6TT	3.0	250	460	S7	1865	5.4	–	9.0	98	63		A
Turbo	$125,800	V6TT	3.6	294	550	S7	1925	4.8	–	9.2	98	63		A

Cayenne — Now larger, lighter and less ugly

✅ Drives like a Porsche on road, and decent off-road; rousing atmo and stonking TT V8s
❌ Hybrid more exxy and thirsty than Diesel (at least it's quicker), and feels a little artificial
• **The Pick:** Greenies won't like you anyway, so give 'em good reason with the 382kW Turbo

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Diesel	$106,100	V6TD	3.0	193	580	A8	2110	7.2	–	6.6	D	63		A
	$107,600	V6	3.6	220	400	A8	2040	7.6	–	9.2	95	63		A
S Diesel	$144,400	V8TTD	4.2	283	850	A8	2215	5.3	–	8.0	D	63		A
S	$141,200	V6TT	3.6	309	550	A8	2085	5.4	–	9.5	95	63	01/15	A
S E-Hybrid	$140,800	V6H	3.6	306	590	A8	2350	5.9	–	3.4	95	63	12/14	A
GTS	$154,200	V6TT	3.6	324	600	A8	2110	5.1		9.8	98	63		A
Turbo	$232,900	V8TT	4.8	382	750	A8	2185	4.4	–	11.2	98	63		A
Turbo S	$284,300	V8TT	4.8	419	800	A8	2235	4.1		11.5	98	63		A

Proton

5yr/150,000km
www.proton.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Preve — Last shot at success														
✓ Smart looks; keen pricing; five-year service package; Lotus-developed suspension ✗ Underwhelming engine; poor cabin quality; lack of overall appeal • **The Pick:** Proton's five-star support package has appeal, if you treat cars as appliances														
GX	$15,490	L4	1.6	80	150	M5	1305	12.0	–	7.2	95	38		F
GX	$17,490	L4	1.6	80	150	C	1325	12.5	–	7.4	95	38		F
GXR	$22,990	L4T	1.6	103	205	C	1356	9.6	–	8.6	95	40		F
Suprima S — S is for sport, we're told														
✓ Heaps of standard gear; safe in a crash; better looker than already sharp Preve sedan ✗ Preve turbo is slightly faster to 100km/h; manual gearbox option not here yet • **The Pick:** Wait for the Super Premium before doing anything rash														
GX	$20,990	L4T	1.6	103	205	C	1355	9.9	–	8.8	95	39		F
GXR	$25,790	L4T	1.6	103	205	C	1370	9.9	–	8.8	95	41		F
Exora — Australia's most affordable 7-seater														
✓ Driveaway pricing; solid after-sales service; spacious and flexible interior ✗ Four star ANCAP safety; lacking performance; no cruise control on GX; no curtain airbags • **The Pick:** Exora GXR gains useful kit including leather, reverse camera and cruise														
GX	$25,990	L4T	1.6	103	205	C	1475	–	–	8.2	91	56		F
GXR	$27,990	L4T	1.6	103	205	C	1485	–	–	8.2	91	56		F

Renault

5yr/unlimited km
www.renault.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Clio — Fashion and fun, especially the RS														
✓ Charming new Clio blends dynamic excellence with terrific new turbocharged engines ✗ 1.2 turbo dual-clutch only; some (optional) colour-coding looks cheap; no rear airbags • **The Pick:** The Expression three-pot manual, or the superb Renaultsport in base trim														
Authentique TCe90	$16,790	L3T	0.9	66	135	M5	1019	12.2	–	4.5	95	42		F
Expression TCe90	$18,290	L3T	0.9	66	135	M5	1019	12.2	–	4.5	95	46	10/13	F
Expression TCe120	$20,290	L4T	1.2	88	190	S6	1104	*10.6*	*17.6*	5.2	95	47	03/15	F
Dynamique TCe120	$23,990	L4T	1.2	88	190	S6	1104	9.4	–	5.2	95	48	10/13	F
GT	$25,490	L4T	1.2	88	190	S6	1120	9.4	–	5.2	95	49		F
GT Premium	$28,990	L4T	1.2	88	190	S6	1120	*10.9*	*17.9*	5.2	95	50	03/16	F
RS200 Sport	$29,490	L4T	1.6	147	240	S6	1218	6.7	14.9	6.3	95	52		F
RS200 Cup	$31,990	L4T	1.6	147	240	S6	1218	*6.9*	*15.0*	6.3	95	51	02/14	F
RS200 Sport Prem.	$34,990	L4T	1.6	147	240	S6	1218	6.7	14.9	6.3	95	52		F
RS200 Cup Prem.	$37,490	L4T	1.6	147	240	S6	1218	6.7	14.9	6.3	95	51		F
Megane — Handling champs														
✓ RS265 is brilliant; GT220 is a cracking fast wagon; re-platformed base cars handle well ✗ No GT-Line manuals for Australia; Renault's build quality is far from Japanese-perfect • **The Pick:** The RS265 – it's our hot-hatch benchmark. Or the feisty GT220 wagon														
Authentique	$20,990	L4T	1.2	97	205	M6	1205	*10.7*	*17.4*	5.6	95	44	04/15	F
Authentique	$23,490	L4T	1.2	97	205	S6	1247	10.9	–	5.6	95	44		F
Authentique	$25,990	L4TD	1.5	81	240	S6	1250	11.7	–	4.5	D	45		F
GT-Line	$26,990	L4T	1.2	97	205	S6	1247	10.9	–	5.6	95	52		F
GT-Line	$29,490	L4TD	1.5	81	240	S6	1290	11.7	–	4.5	D	48		F
GT-Line Premium	$30,990	L4T	1.2	97	205	S6	1247	10.9	–	5.6	95	48		F
GT-Line Premium	$33,490	L4TD	1.5	81	240	S6	1290	11.7	–	4.5	D	48		F
Dynamique Wagon	$27,490	L4T	1.2	97	205	S6	1252	10.9	–	5.6	95	51		F
Dynamique Wagon	$28,990	L4TD	1.5	81	240	S6	1288	11.7	–	4.5	D	48		F
GT-Line Wagon	$28,990	L4T	1.2	97	205	S6	1252	10.9	–	5.6	95	48		F
GT-Line Wagon	$31,490	L4TD	1.5	81	240	S6	1288	11.7	–	4.5	D	48		F
GT-Line Prem Wag	$32,990	L4T	1.2	97	205	S6	1252	10.9	–	5.6	95	48		F
GT-Line Prem Wag	$35,490	L4TD	1.5	81	240	S6	1288	11.7	–	4.5	D	48		F
GT 220	$35,990	L4T	2.0	162	340	M6	1326	7.6	–	7.3	98	47		F
GT 220 Wagon	$37,490	L4T	2.0	162	340	M6	1388	*7.2*	*14.9*	7.3	98	51	09/13	F
GT 220 Premium	$39,990	L4T	2.0	162	340	M6	1326	7.6	–	7.3	98	47		F
GT 220 Prem Wagon	$41,490	L4T	2.0	162	340	M6	1388	7.6	–	7.3	98	52		F
RS265 Cup	$43,990	L4T	2.0	195	360	M6	1374	*6.5*	*14.5*	7.5	98	55	04/13	F
RS265 Cup Premium	$47,990	L4T	2.0	195	360	M6	1374	6.0	–	7.5	98	55		F
RS275 Trophy	$52,990	L4T	2.0	202	360	M6	1376	6.0	–	7.5	98	56	03/15	F
Megane CC — Pretty on the outside														
✓ Cheaper than a VW Eos; newfound sense of style; smooth and reasonably sturdy ✗ 2.0-litre and CVT struggle with all that folding-hardtop lard; deserves a low-boost turbo • **The Pick:** Arguably the sporty GT-Line, though Holden's slick new Cascada is cheaper														
Dynamique	$38,990	L4	2.0	103	195	C	1596	11.7	–	8.1	95	50	–	F
GT-Line	$44,490	L4	2.0	103	195	C	1596	11.7	–	8.1	95	49	–	F
Floride	$45,990	L4	2.0	103	195	C	1596	11.7	–	8.1	95	49	–	F
Latitude — Bottom of the mid-size pile														
✓ Equipment for the price; torquey turbo-diesel undercuts syrupy V6 ✗ Lacks ride comfort and handling balance; average performance; it's a Samsung SM5 • **The Pick:** A Mondeo, Passat, Skoda Superb or Mazda 6 are all superior options														
Dynamique	$37,490	V6	3.5	174	330	A6	–	–	–	10.5	95	40	06/11	F
Dynamique	$38,490	L4TD	2.0	127	380	A6	1620	–	–	6.5	D	40		F
Privilege	$43,490	V6	3.5	174	330	A6	–	–	–	10.5	95	40	07/11	F
Privilege	$44,490	L4TD	2.0	127	380	A6	1620	–	–	6.5	D	40		F

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Captur — Très chic														
✓ Brings high style to the baby SUV segment; supple dynamics; plush seats; packaging ✗ 100kg weight gain takes the shine off Clio's drivetrains; laggy dual-clutch gearbox • **The Pick:** Reduced price and weight of charming TCe90 three-pot manual earns our vote														
Expression TCe90	$22,990	L3T	0.9	66	135	M5	1134	13.0	–	4.9	95	49		F
Expression TCe120	$25,990	L4T	1.2	88	190	S6	1215	10.9	–	5.4	95	50		F
Dynamique TCe120	$27,990	L4T	1.2	88	190	S6	1215	*11.1*	*18.0*	5.4	95	50	05/15	F
Koleos — Euro badge without Euro flair														
✓ Prettier facelift; plusher cabin with space up front; lots of cubbies; smart split tailgate ✗ Mediocre drivetrains and dynamics (it's X-Trail-based); tight rear seat • **The Pick:** A French-badged SUV, made in Korea, with Japanese underpinnings. No thanks														
Expression 4x2	$28,490	L4	2.5	126	226	M6	1557	–	–	9.6	95	46		F
Expression 4x2	$29,990	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1557	–	–	9.3	95	47		F
Bose Edition 4x2	$37,490	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1557	–	–	9.3	95	48		F
Bose Edition 4x4	$40,490	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1680	*10.6*	*17.6*	9.5	95	48	08/14	A
Bose Edition 4x4	$42,490	L4TD	2.0	127	320	A6	1789	–	–	7.6	D	48		A
Sport Way 4x2	$37,490	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1622	–	–	9.3	D	54		F
Sport Way 4x2	$39,490	L4TD	2.0	127	320	A6	1762	–	–	7.0	D	54		F
Privilege 4x4	$45,240	L4	2.5	126	226	C	1557	–	–	9.5	95	58		A
Privilege 4x4	$47,240	L4TD	2.0	127	320	A6	1789	–	–	7.6	D	58		A

Rolls-Royce

www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Ghost — 'Baby' of the range Rolls on														
✓ Presence and grace, without arrogance; stonking V12; suicide (sorry, 'coach') rear doors ✗ Shares plenty of mechanicals with 7 Series, but who cares when it's this impressive? • **The Pick:** You've decided on the Roller, so money is no object - go the long wheelbase														
	$595,000	V12TT	6.6	420	780	A8	2360	4.9	–	13.6	95	63	08/10	R
EWB	$675,000	V12TT	6.6	420	780	A8	–	–	–	13.7	95	63		R
Wraith — Silent coupe assassin														
✓ Subtly flamboyant styling; super-smooth and effortlessly powerful; rarity; presence ✗ At 5.3m long and nearly 2.4 tonnes, there's a limit to the Wraith's dynamic credentials • **The Pick:** Just the one Sir (or Madam), but no coupe on earth will make life so easy														
	$645,000	V12TT	6.6	465	800	A8	2360	4.6		14.0	95	53		R
Phantom — Perennial land-yacht still magnificent														
✓ Powerful, stately engine; jaw-dropping presence; ultra-luxe cabin; suicide doors ✗ Sheer size hugely intimidating for all concerned, as is Phantom's million-dollar pricetag • **The Pick:** Any of them: the sedan is as palatial as they come; coupe dials up the sex factor														
	$855,000	V12	6.7	338	720	A8	2649	5.9	–	14.8	95	61	05/04	R
EWB	$990,000	V12	6.7	338	720	A8	2670	5.9	–	14.9	95	61		R
Coupe	$995,000	V12	6.7	338	720	A8	2629	5.6	–	14.8	95	61		R
Drophead	$1,075,000	V12	6.7	338	720	A8	2630	–	–	14.8	95	61		R

Skoda

3yr/unlimited km
www.skoda.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Fabia — A Polo with more														
✓ More personality than a Polo; classy interior; tractable engines; safety and equipment ✗ Cruise not standard; sports suspension lacks suppleness; low-speed steering feel • **The Pick:** Practicality of the wagon makes it a winner, and stick with the base 66TSI														
66TSI	$15,990	L4T	1.2	66	160	M5	1042	10.9	–	4.8	95	48		F
66TSI wagon	$17,140	L4T	1.2	66	160	M5	1066	11.0	–	4.8	95	48	09/15	F
81TSI	$20,290	L4T	1.2	81	175	S7	1087	9.4	–	4.8	95	50	09/15	F
81TSI wagon	$21,440	L4T	1.2	81	175	S7	1111	9.6	–	4.8	95	50		F
Rapid Spaceback — Space, the family frontier														
✓ Expanded and brilliantly packaged Polo platform; Mk6 Golf's gutsy 90TSI turbo four ✗ Dark and dull interior reflects its budget status; not a handling hero; old-gen VW tech • **The Pick:** The cheaper, the better, because the Rapid is a long way from Skoda's best														
81TSI Ambition	$17,990	L4T	1.2	81	175	M6	1155	10.2	–	5.4	95	40	08/14	F
92TSI Ambition	$20,990	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1210	9.4	–	6.0	95	47		F
81TSI Monte Carlo	$22,990	L4T	1.2	81	175	M6	1155	10.2	–	5.4	95	42		F
92TSI Monte Carlo	$25,790	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1210	9.4	–	6.0	95	49	08/14	F
Yeti — Not at all abominable														
✓ Ultra-compact MPV/SUV that prioritises cabin- and drivetrain-efficiency; brilliant 90TSI ✗ No AWD petrol option; 4x4 is almost Tiguan money; small boot; some NVH issues • **The Pick:** Now even cheaper front-drive 1.2 turbo is light, roomy and great value														
Active 77TSI	$24,390	L4T	1.2	77	175	M6	1380	11.4	–	6.0	95	43		F
Active 77TSI	$25,790	L4T	1.2	77	175	S7	1410	11.7	–	6.7	95	44		F
Ambition 90TSI	$29,190	L4T	1.4	90	200	S7	1445	10.6	–	6.8	95	44	07/14	F
Outdoor 103TDI 4x4	$34,390	L4TD	2.0	103	350	S6	1595	10.2	–	6.7	D	44	A	
Octavia — Unbeatable space for your dollar														
✓ Spacious interior; enormous luggage capacity; eager and efficient engines; great value ✗ Only 1.8T and RS get multi-link IRS; restless ride of torsion-beam models • **The Pick:** An IRS-equipped Elegance or the Golf GTI's girthy, value-packed sister, the RS														
Ambition	$22,490	L4T	1.4	103	250	M6	1302	8.4	–	5.7	95	50	02/14	F
Ambition	$23,990	L4T	1.4	103	250	S7	1317	8.5	–	5.2	95	50		F
Ambition wagon	$23,990	L4T	1.4	103	250	M6	1340	8.5	–	5.7	95	50		F
Ambition wagon	$25,340	L4T	1.4	103	250	S7	1355	8.6	–	5.2	95	49		F
Ambition Plus	$25,590	L4T	1.4	103	250	M6	1302	8.4	–	5.7	95	50		F
Ambition Plus	$26,790	L4T	1.4	103	250	S7	1317	8.5	–	5.2	95	49		F

NEW ARRIVALS New models for the month highlighted

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
	Recommended Retail Price at time of publication	L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary. Number of cyls or rotors. T=turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid	Litres	Kilowatts	Newton metres	M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT	Kilograms	0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)	0-400m acceleration, in sec s. (*Wheels* tested figures in italics)	Fuel consumption in Litres/100km	Recommended octane rating	Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years	When we drove it	F= Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All drive, PA=Part-time all drive
Ambition Plus wagon	$27,090	L4T	1.4	103	250	M6	1340	8.5	–	5.7	95	49		F
Ambition Plus wagon	$28,140	L4T	1.4	103	250	S7	1355	8.6	–	5.2	95	49		F
Style	$35,090	L4T	1.4	103	250	S7	1317	8.5	–	5.2	95	48		F
Style wagon	$33,540	L4T	1.4	103	250	S7	1355	8.6	–	5.2	95	48		F
Style	$34,690	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1350	7.4	–	5.9	95	48		F
Style wagon	$36,040	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1367	*7.1*	*15.3*	6.1	95	47	04/14	F
Style	$38,190	L4TD	2.0	110	320	S6	1397	8.6	–	4.9	D	45		F
Style wagon	$36,840	L4TD	2.0	110	320	S6	1435	8.7	–	4.9	D	47		F
RS 162 TSI	$37,590	L4T	2.0	162	350	M6	1397	6.8	–	6.4	98	48		F
RS 162 TSI	$38,790	L4T	2.0	162	350	S6	1417	6.9	–	6.6	98	48		F
RS 162 TSI wagon	$39,090	L4T	2.0	162	350	M6	1438	*8.7*	–	6.4	98	49	10/14	F
RS 162 TSI wagon	$40,140	L4T	2.0	162	350	S6	1458	7.1	–	6.6	98	49		F
RS 135 TDI	$40,990	L4TD	2.0	135	380	S6	1462	8.2	–	5.2	D	48		F
RS 135 TDI wagon	$42,990	L4TD	2.0	135	380	S6	1503	8.3	–	5.3	D	49		F
Scout	Bob-a-job week, daily													
	✅ Jacked-up Octavia is a fine compact SUV alternative; grunty oiler; roomy interior ❌ Not as slick or refined as its Golf Mk7 and A3 sisters, though the Scout has a definite USP • **The Pick:** Unless you travel big distances, or want a manual 'box, the 1.8 turbo-petrol DSG													
110 TDI	$32,990	L4TD	2.0	110	340	M6	1561	9.1	–	5.3	D	52		A
132 TSI	$38,590	L4T	1.8	132	280	S6	1557	7.8	–	7.1	95	52		A
135 TDI	$41,390	L4TD	2.0	135	380	S6	1594	7.8	–	5.3	D	53		A
Superb	The name almost fits													
	✅ The most rear legroom this side of a Caprice; tech-savvy drivetrains; classy interior ❌ Badge snobs will scoff; ride should be plusher for this category of car; homely sedan • **The Pick:** V6 is a hard-charger, but TSI and TDI are the smart Falcadore alternatives													
Ambition 118TSI	$38,990	L4T	1.8	118	250	S7	1561	8.5	–	7.3	95	43	02/10	F
Ambition 103TDI	$38,990	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1602	10.2	–	6.1	D	51		F
Ambition 103TDI 4x4	$41,990	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1678	10.7	–	6.4	D	51		A
Ambition TSI wagon	$40,990	L4T	1.8	118	250	S7	1583	8.6	–	7.5	95	42	09/10	F
Ambition 103TDI wgn	$40,990	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1624	10.3	–	6.2	D	51		F
Ambition TDI 4x4 wg	$43,990	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1700	10.8	–	6.5	D	51		A
Elegance 118TSI	$45,490	L4T	1.8	118	250	S7	1561	8.6	*16.3*	7.3	95	44	07/11	F
Elegance 103TDI 4x4	$48,490	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1678	10.7	–	6.4	D	52		A
Elegance 125TDI	$48,490	L4TD	2.0	125	350	S6	1605	8.8	–	6.3	D	45		F
Elegance 191FSI	$56,490	V6	3.6	191	350	S6	1755	6.5	–	10.3	95	51	08/09	A
Elegance TSI wagon	$47,490	L4T	1.8	118	250	S7	1583	8.6	–	7.5	95	44	12/10	F
Elegance TDI 4x4 wg	$50,490	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1700	10.8	–	6.5	D	52		A
Elegance 125TDI wgn	$50,490	L4TD	2.0	125	350	S6	1627	8.9	–	6.6	D	45		F
Elegance 191FSI wgn	$58,490	V6	3.6	191	350	S6	1777	6.6	–	10.4	95	51		A
Outdoor 125 TDI	$52,690	L4TD	2.0	125	350	S6		8.8		5.9	D	37		A

Ssangyong

3yr/100,000km
www.ssangyong.com.au

Korando	It actually stands for 'Korea can do'													
	✅ Equipment for the asking price; inoffensive looks; decent fuel economy ❌ Sloppy steering; laggy diesel; anaemic petrol; third-world image • **The Pick:** Base S is priced too close to other A-grade medium SUVs for us to recommend it													
S	$25,990	L4	2.0	110	197	A6	1599	–	–	7.9	91	45		F
SX AWD	$27,990	L4TD	2.0	129	360	A6	1747	–	–	7.5	D	44		A
Stavic	Frankenstein with lipstick													
	✅ Cheap road to seven seats; standard equipment list from a much higher price bracket ❌ A generational leap forward, yet the rear end still looks like unfinished business • **The Pick:** A vasectomy. Or a second-hand Honda Odyssey. If you must, the base S													
S	$29,990	L4TD	2.0	114	360	M6	1968	–	–	7.6	D	50		R
S	$31,990	L4TD	2.0	114	360	A5	1992	–	–	7.8	D	51		R
SPR	$36,990	L4TD	2.0	114	360	A5	1992	–	–	7.8	D	50		R
Rexton	A rough-and-ready 4x4													
	✅ Switchable 4WD with high- and low-range and a 2.6-tonne braked towing capacity ❌ Separate-chassis structure adds weight and kills agility; it's outdated and ungainly **The Pick:** A second-hand Toyota 4WD of some description. Or even a Pajero...													
SX	$39,990	L4TD	2.0	115	360	A5	1985	–	–	7.8	D	38		A

Subaru

3yr/unlimited
www.subaru.com.au

Impreza	Impreza now more impressive													
	✅ A decent looker; classier cabin with fresh infotainment; unrivalled durability reputation ❌ Uninspiring, torque-deprived 2.0-litre four; dynamically, it's all a bit soggy • **The Pick:** Impreza has made up some ground, and base-model price is now drive-away													
2.0i hatch	$22,990*	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1345	10.5	–	7.1	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i hatch	$24,990*	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1385	11.1	–	6.8	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i sedan	$22,990*	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1345	10.5	–	7.1	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i sedan	$24,990*	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1385	11.1	–	6.8	91	56	08/12	A
2.0i Premium hatch	$21,400	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1335	10.5	–	7.1	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i Premium hatch	$23,400	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1375	11.1	–	6.8	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i Premium sedan	$21,400	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1335	10.5	–	7.1	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i Premium sedan	$23,400	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1375	11.1	–	6.8	91	56	04/12	A
2.0i-S hatch	$27,400	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1385	11.1	–	6.8	91	57	04/12	A
2.0i-S sedan	$27,400	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1385	11.1	–	6.8	91	57	04/12	A

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
XV	XV gets jack of Impreza													
	✅ Cool colours, black alloys and extra ground clearance; more fun than an Impreza ❌ Minuscule boot; non-switchable ESC kills the fun factor on dirt; deserves Forester's 2.5 • **The Pick:** Rivals Qashqai, ASX and S-Cross. We'd go Qashqai, though the XV has its appeal													
2.0i	$26,490	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1390	10.5	–	7.3	91	52		A
2.0i	$28,990	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1420	10.7	–	7.5	91	52		A
2.0i-L	$29,990	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1405	10.5	–	7.3	91	54		A
2.0i-L	$32,490	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1435	10.7	–	7.5	91	52		A
2.0i-S	$32,490	F4	2.0	110	196	M6	1415	10.5	–	7.3	91	54		A
2.0i-S	$34,990	F4	2.0	110	196	C	1445	10.7	–	7.5	91	52	03/12	A
WRX	New-generation icon													
	✅ Rex and STi finally get the chassis fluidity they deserve, and good cabins, for a top price ❌ WRX lacks STi's better-quality seats and its 17-inch alloys look tiny; unyielding ride • **The Pick:** Despite WRX's all-new engine, the sharply focused STi is worth the extra coin													
	$38,990	F4T	2.0	197	350	M6	1469	6.0	–	9.2	95	57		A
	$40,990	F4T	2.0	197	350	C	1527	6.3	–	8.6	95	57	08/14	A
Premium	$44,890	F4T	2.0	197	350	M6	1504	6.0	–	9.2	95	58	05/14	A
Premium	$45,990	F4T	2.0	197	350	C	1562	6.3	–	8.6	95	58		A
STi	$49,490	F4T	2.5	221	407	M6	1525	4.9	–	10.4	98	61		A
STi Premium	$55,390	F4T	2.5	221	407	M6	1537	*5.3*	*13.6*	10.4	98	61	09/14	A
Liberty	Ugly no longer													
	✅ Massive price cuts and a big lift in style; classy interior; smooth refinement; AWD grip ❌ Numb steering; unsettled ride; no manuals or GTs; 2.5i doesn't sound like a flat four • **The Pick:** Not the driver's car it once was, but if you can stretch to it, the 3.6R													
2.5i	$29,990	F4	2.5	129	235	C	1542	9.6	–	7.3	91	55	03/15	A
2.5i Premium	$35,490	F4	2.5	129	235	C	1568	9.6	–	7.3	91	57		A
3.6R Premium	$41,990	F6	3.6	191	350	C	1645	*7.3*	*15.3*	9.9	91	57	02/15	A
Outback	Classy SUV alternative													
	✅ Better-riding than Liberty; neat styling; extensive equipment; impressive CVT tranny ❌ No petrol manuals; weirdly weighted steering; flat six is so smooth it lacks character • **The Pick:** Arguably better than its Liberty stablemate in all drivetrain variations													
2.5i	$35,990	F4	2.5	129	235	C	1597	10.2	–	7.3	91	54	03/15	A
2.5i Premium	$41,490	F4	2.5	129	235	C	1628	10.2	–	7.3	91	55		A
2.0D	$35,490	F4TD	2.0	110	350	M6	1630	9.7		5.7	D	54		A
2.0D	$37,490	F4TD	2.0	110	350	C	1684	9.9	–	6.3	D	54		A
2.0D Premium	$41,490	F4TD	2.0	110	350	M6	1668	9.7	–	5.7	D	55		A
2.0D Premium	$43,490	F4TD	2.0	110	350	C	1723	*9.9*	*17.0*	6.3	D	55	07/15	A
3.6R Premium	$47,990	F6	3.6	191	350	C	1702	7.6	–	9.9	95	56	02/15	A
BRZ	Brilliantly engineered by Subaru													
	✅ Superb steering, balance; engine above 4500rpm; driveaway pricing; free servicing ❌ Sounds like a Forester at low revs; not as rapid as a WRX; same wheels as the Toyota • **The Pick:** Same as Toyota 86, but slightly less oversteery. Your choice													
	$37,150	F4	2.0	147	205	M6	1256	7.6	–	7.8	98	61	09/12	R
	$39,730	F4	2.0	147	205	A6	1286	8.2	–	7.1	98	61		R

Not so Smart

SOME prominent models have been disappearing from our Showroom section in recent months, including Hyundai's i20, Holden's Volt and Honda's COTY-winning CR-Z.

Early in the new year, Smart's ForTwo microcar was laid to rest in Australia following a decision not to introduce the next-gen model, or its ForFour relative. When the Smart brand launched here in 2003, it was claimed to be "ideally suited to the growing number of inner-city dwellers", with plans to sell 1000 cars annually. The peak was 799 in 2005 (ForTwo and ForFour combined), thanks mainly to premium pricing.

Forester — Subtly satisfying

✅ Spacious cabin; fluid handling; impressive ride and refinement; XT's impressive pace
❌ Engines don't really sound like flat fours any more; full-size spare robs boot space
• **The Pick:** Alongside BRZ and terrific new WRX, it's the best Subaru on sale

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
2.0i-L	$29,990	F4	2.0	110	198	M6	1489	10.6	–	7.2	90	52		A
2.5i-L	$32,990	F4	2.5	126	235	C	1519	*10.1*	*17.2*	8.1	90	54	08/14	A
2.5i-S	$39,490	F4	2.5	126	235	C	1555	9.9	–	8.1	90	55		A
2.0D-L	$33,490	F4TD	2.0	108	350	M6	1578	10.2	–	5.9	D	54	06/13	A
2.0D-L	$35,490	F4TD	2.0	108	350	C	1633	–	–	6.3	D	54		A
2.0D-S	$39,490	F4TD	2.0	108	350	M6	1612	10.2	–	5.9	D	55		A
2.0D-S	$41,490	F4TD	2.0	108	350	C	1667	–	–	6.4	D	55		A
XT	$40,990	F4T	2.0	177	350	C	1631	7.5	–	8.1	95	55		A
XT Premium	$47,990	F4T	2.0	177	350	C	1649	*7.0*	*15.1*	8.1	95	56	11/15	A

Suzuki

3yr/100,000km
www.suzuki.com.au

Celerio — Cheap seats ain't so bad

✅ Drive-away pricing; rear seatbelt reminders; peppy three-pot; decent ride and handling
❌ Looks geeky; ridiculous name; steering a bit vague; CVT slippage at full throttle
• **The Pick:** Sweet manual gearbox makes Suzuki's toaster-on-wheels better than it looks

	$12,990*	L3	1.0	50	90	M5	830	*12.9*	*18.6*	4.7	91	46	06/15	F
	$13,990*	L3	1.0	50	90	C	860	13.5	–	4.8	91	46	05/15	F

Swift — Quiet achiever

✅ Impressively refined and dynamic; seven airbags; Sport is a decent budget warm hatch
❌ Sport is too expensive compared to a Fiesta ST; 1.4 is less powerful than old Swift's 1.5
• **The Pick:** Mid-range GL is great value; Sport is a much better steer than Veloster or Koup

GL	$15,990	L4	1.4	70	130	M5	1005	–	–	5.5	91	55	01/12	F
GL	$17,990	L4	1.4	70	130	A4	1025	*11.5*	*18.3*	6.2	91	54	03/15	F
GL Navigator	$17,490	L4	1.4	70	130	M5	1005	*9.8*	*16.9*	5.5	91	43	11/11	F
GL Navigator	$19,490	L4	1.4	70	130	A4	1025	–	–	6.2	91	44		F
GLX Navigator	$19,990	L4	1.4	70	130	M5	1025	–	–	5.5	91	47	05/11	F
GLX Navigator	$21,990	L4	1.4	70	130	A4	1045	–	–	6.2	91	55	01/12	F
Sport	$24,490	L4	1.6	100	160	M6	1060	*8.6*	*16.3*	6.5	95	49	11/13	F
Sport	$26,490	L4	1.6	100	160	C	1075	–	–	6.1	95	48		F

S-Cross — Crosses over to modernity

✅ Neatly straddles two small-SUV classes in size but not price; 110kg lighter than old SX4
❌ Only adequate power; too much like a Swift inside; top model expensive for this class
• **The Pick:** GL manual dangerously close to a base Golf so possibly a GLX AWD. If we had to

GL	$22,990	L4	1.6	86	156	M5	1085	–	–	5.8	91	45		F
GL	$25,490	L4	1.6	86	156	C	1125	–	–	5.8	91	45		F
GL Nav	$25,490	L4	1.6	86	156	C	1125	–	–	5.8	91	46		F
GLX	$29,990	L4	1.6	86	156	C	1125	*10.5*	*17.6*	5.8	91	46	05/15	F
GLX	$32,990	L4	1.6	86	156	C	1190	–	–	6.2	91	46		A
GLX Prestige	$34,990	L4	1.6	86	156	C	1190	–	–	6.2	91	47		A

Kizashi — Winning mid-sized Swift sibling

✅ Cool name; well-equipped; (mostly) quality materials; (mostly) good handling
❌ Tight rear leg- and headroom; CVT lacks the fizz of the manual; deserves more grunt
• **The Pick:** Kizashi over a Korean if you want a value-packed medium sedan

Sport Touring	$28,990	L4	2.4	131	230	M6	1445	–	–	7.9	91	42		F
Sport Touring	$31,490	L4	2.4	131	230	C	1485	–	–	7.9	91	41		F
Sport Prestige	$37,990	L4	2.4	131	230	C	1530	–	–	7.9	91	42		F
Sport AWD	$39,990	L4	2.4	131	230	C	1600	–	–	8.4	91	42		A

Jimny Sierra — Lives on with stability control

✅ Surprisingly capable off-road; proven mechanicals; cheapest way to go bush bashing
❌ Bouncy ride and poor handling; unrefined; gutless engine means you'll be revving it
• **The Pick:** With a pair of live axles, it's a true 4WD, but if that's your thing, see below...

	$20,990	L4	1.3	63	110	M5	1060	–	–	7.1	91	46		A
	$22,990	L4	1.3	63	110	A4	1075	–	–	7.4	91	46		A

Vitara — Iconic nameplate returns

✅ Combines smart packaging, competent dynamics and keen pricing into a likeable CX-3 rival
❌ Sticky steering weighting with inconsistent response; cheap cabin plastics; pricey AWD
• **The Pick:** Keep it simple with the front-drive RT-S, or wait for the forthcoming Turbo

RT-S	$21,990	L4	1.6	86	156	M5	1075	–	–	5.8	91			F
RT-S	$23,990	L4	1.6	86	156	A6	1075	–	–	6.0	91			F
RT-X	$31,990	L4	1.6	86	156	A6	1185	–	–	6.3	91			A

Tesla

4yr/80,000km
www.teslamotors.com/en_AU

Model S — Space-age electric celebrity

✅ Multiple global 'Car of the Year' awards; incredible mega-tablet centre stack; modernity
❌ Charging time; are ultra-conservative luxo buyers ready for a progressive car like this?
• **The Pick:** As a triumphant single-finger salute to the Europeans, any Model S you choose

70	$128,578	E	–	235	440	A1	–	5.8	–	0	–	55		R
70D	$138,813	E	–	245	525	A1	–	5.4	–	0	–	55		A
85	$149,867	E	–	278	440	A1	–	5.6	–	0	–	54		R
85D	$160,108	E	–	311	660	A1	–	4.4	–	0	–	54		A
P85D	$201,738	E	–	515	967	A1	2239	3.0	–	0	–	54		A

Toyota

3yr/100,000km
www.toyota.com.au

Yaris — X-factor on face value

✅ Updated Yaris gains striking new face, refinement improvements and fresh multimedia
❌ Ancient drivetrains; below-average fuel economy; flawed driving position
• **The Pick:** Hatch now 5dr only and best as a manual. Avoid the decade-old Yaris sedan

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Ascent	$14,990	L4	1.3	63	121	M5	1025	–	–	5.7	91	46		F
Ascent	$16,490	L4	1.3	63	121	A4	1035	*13.7*	*19.3*	6.3	91	45	03/15	F
SX	$16,990	L4	1.5	80	141	M5	1045	–	–	5.8	91	46		F
SX	$18,490	L4	1.5	80	141	A4	1055	–	–	6.3	91	46		F
ZR	$21,490	L4	1.5	80	141	A4	1055	–	–	6.3	91	47		F
YRS sedan	$17,490	L4	1.5	80	141	M5	1030	–	–	6.1	91	46		F
YRS sedan	$18,990	L4	1.5	80	141	A4	1045	–	–	6.7	91	46		F
YRX sedan	$20,990	L4	1.5	80	141	A4	1045	10.6	–	6.7	91	47		F

Prius C — Hybrid Yaris by another name

✅ Diesel-beating fuel efficiency in a sub-$25K light hatch package
❌ Dull dynamics true to Prius tradition; budget plastics; C-grade in more than just name
• **The Pick:** A Polo 81TSI and Mazda 2 Genki are miles better, unless you're eco-obsessed

	$22,990	L4H	1.5	74	169	C	1120	–	–	3.9	91	57		F
i-Tech	$25,990	L4H	1.5	74	169	C	1140	–	–	3.9	91	58		F

Corolla — Finally, a Corolla with substance

✅ Roomy and well-built; strong body; decent dynamics; attractive front end; reliability
❌ Heavier and slower than the previous model; unexciting drivetrain; snoozy sedan
• **The Pick:** Ascent Sport manual, but both Mazda 3 and Golf are more polished small cars

Ascent hatch	$19,790	L4	1.8	103	173	M6	1255	–	–	6.7	91	56		F
Ascent hatch	$21,790	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1275	–	–	6.1	91	54		F
Ascent Sport hatch	$20,790	L4	1.8	103	173	M6	1270	–	–	6.7	91	56		F
Ascent Sport hatch	$22,790	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1275	–	–	6.1	91	54	10/15	F
Ascent sedan	$20,740	L4	1.8	103	173	M6	1250	–	–	7.0	91	48		F
Ascent sedan	$22,990	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1280	–	–	6.6	91	47		F
SX hatch	$23,490	L4	1.8	103	173	M6	1275	–	–	6.7	91	56		F
SX hatch	$25,490	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1310	–	–	6.1	91	56		F
SX sedan	$22,990	L4	1.8	103	173	M6	1255	–	–	7.0	91	49		F
SX sedan	$25,240	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1285	–	–	6.6	91	45		F
ZR hatch	$28,990	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1275	*10.1*	*17.3*	6.1	91	57	12/15	F
ZR sedan	$30,990	L4	1.8	103	173	C	1295	–	–	6.6	91	50		F

Rukus — Is it really hip to be square?

✅ Funky dash layout and 'unique' exterior styling; decent space and practicality
❌ Does Gen Y really want a box on wheels? Drivetrain is unimpressive; average dynamics
• **The Pick:** Better to drive than a Kia Soul, but vastly inferior to a Skoda Yeti

Build 1	$26,990	L4	2.4	125	224	A4	1390	–	–	8.8	91	45		F
Build 2	$29,490	L4	2.4	125	224	A4	1420	–	–	8.8	91	46		F
Build 3	$32,490	L4	2.4	125	224	A4	1430	–	–	8.8	91	46	08/10	F

Camry — New metal, sharp pricing

✅ Space and value; sweet hybrid drivetrain blends grunt and economy; SX's handling
❌ Dull petrol four; six-speed auto not particularly intuitive; low-speed ride issues
• **The Pick:** SX looks decent and handles well, but an Atara S Hybrid makes the most sense

Altise	$26,490	L4	2.5	133	231	A6	1460	–	–	7.8	91	43		F
Altise	$30,490	L4H	2.5	151	270	C	1575	*7.9*	*15.7*	5.2	91	47	07/15	F
Atara S	$29,490	L4	2.5	135	235	A6	1460	–	–	7.8	91	44		F
Atara S	$32,490	L4H	2.5	151	270	C	1575	–	–	5.2	91	47		F
Atara SX	$31,990	L4	2.5	135	235	A6	1460	*8.8*	*16.4*	7.8	91	44	07/15	F
Atara SL	$37,440	L4	2.5	135	235	A6	1460	–	–	7.8	91	45		F
Atara SL	$40,440	L4H	2.5	151	270	C	1575	–	–	5.2	91	50		F

Prius hatch — Clever, spacious, frugal

✅ Prius III is even more frugal, and it no longer falls over itself in corners
❌ Still completely emotionless and artificial to drive; arcade-game steering; poor resale
• **The Pick:** It'll halve your fuel bills over a petrol-only Camry, but i-Tech is overpriced

	$33,490	L4H	1.8	100	142	C	1365	10.4	–	3.9	95	58	02/10	F
i-Tech	$43,990	L4H	1.8	100	142	C	1425	10.4	–	3.9	95	48	02/10	F

Prius V — Avensis Verso painted green

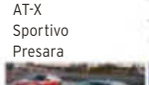
✅ Voracious breeders will love the wallet-saving hybrid tech, and the extra seats
❌ Being part of the Prius family means forfeiting driver enjoyment; zero boot with seats up
• **The Pick:** Be financially frugal and stick wih the base

	$34,490	L4H	1.8	100	142	C	1565	–	–	4.4	95	55	07/12	F
i-Tech	$44,490	L4H	1.8	100	142	C	1565	–	–	4.4	95	57		F

Aurion — Still a Camry with extra pots

✅ Lovely 3.5-litre V6 delivers superb performance; Sportivo's sharper chassis and styling
❌ Ride quality of Prodigy, Presara and Sportivo; average steering; power-down issues
• **The Pick:** Despite its ride issues, the upgraded Sportivo with its tougher style

AT-X	$36,490	V6	3.5	200	336	A6	1525	*6.1*	*14.2*	9.3	91	33	08/12	F
Sportivo	$40,990	V6	3.5	200	336	A6	1555	–	–	9.3	91	34	06/12	F
Presara	$50,440	V6	3.5	200	336	A6	1550	–	–	9.3	91	34	06/12	F



86 — Superb, and not just for a Toyota

✅ '*Hachi-roku*' is Japanese for brilliant rear-drive balance, driving purity and value
❌ Prius-derived tyres make it skatey in the wet; some awkward styling details
• **The Pick:** The GT is unbelievably good value. As in, we didn't believe it'd cost just $30K...

GT	$29,990	F4	2.0	147	205	M6	1257	7.0	*15.0*	7.8	95	62	08/12	R
GT	$32,490	F4	2.0	147	205	A6	–	8.2	–	7.1	95	63		R
GTS	$35,990	F4	2.0	147	205	M6	1275	7.6	–	7.8	95	65	11/13	R

NEW ARRIVALS
New models for the month highlighted

Recommended Retail Price at time of publication | L=in-line, V=vee, F=flat, R=rotary, Number of cyls or rotors, T=turbo, S=s'charged, D=diesel, H=hybrid | Litres | Kilowatts | Newton metres | M=manual, A=automatic, S=sequential, C=CVT | Kilograms | 0-100km/h acceleration, in secs (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | 0-400m acceleration, in sec s (*Wheels* tested figures in italics) | Fuel consumption in Litres/100km | Recommended octane rating | Glass's predicted resale rating, retained after 3 years | When we drove it | F=Front drive, R=Rear drive, A=All-wheel drive

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
GTS	$38,490	F4	2.0	147	205	A6	–	8.2	–	7.1	95	64	10/12	R
Tarago	**The legendary family bus**													
☑ This is the people mover of people movers with a refined and updated interior														
☒ Won't do much for your sex appeal; lacks the innovation of the 1990s 'egg' Tarago														
• **The Pick:** If you can stretch the budget, get the GLi V6 and gain good sprog hauling torque														
GLi	$46,990	L4	2.4	125	224	C	1795	–	–	8.9	91	61		F
GLX	$49,490	L4	2.4	125	224	C	1795	–	–	8.9	91	61		F
GLi	$51,990	V6	3.5	202	340	A6	1870	–	–	10.2	95	60		F
GLX	$57,490	V6	3.5	202	340	A6	1870	–	–	10.3	95	60		F
Ultima	$67,600	V6	3.5	202	340	A6	1930	–	–	10.3	95	61		F
RAV4	**Is bigger really better?**													
☑ Lots of room; decent versatility; capable performance; CVT works well with 2.0-litre														
☒ Bulky dashboard an ergonomic malaise; engine needs revs; not very good off-road														
• **The Pick:** A CX-5, X-Trail, Kuga or Forester, though the roomy RAV4 has its appeal														
GX 2WD	$27,990	L4	2.0	107	187	M6	1465	–	–	7.7	91			F
GX 2WD	$29,990	L4	2.0	107	187	C	1500	–	–	7.0	91			F
GXL 2WD	$31,990	L4	2.0	107	187	M6	1475	–	–	7.7	91			F
GXL 2WD	$33,990	L4	2.0	107	187	C	1510	–	–	7.0	91			F
GX	$32,990	L4	2.5	132	233	A6	1590	–	–	8.5	91			A
GX	$35,990	L4TD	2.2	110	340	M6	1620	–	–	5.7	D			A
GX	$37,490	L4TD	2.2	110	340	A6	1630	–	–	6.7	D			A
GXL	$36,990	L4	2.5	132	233	A6	1590	–	–	8.5	91			A
GXL	$39,990	L4TD	2.2	110	340	M6	1630	–	–	5.7	D			A
GXL	$41,990	L4TD	2.2	110	340	A6	1630	–	–	6.7	D			A
Cruiser	$44,490	L4	2.5	132	233	A6	1600	–	–	8.5	D			A
Cruiser	$49,490	L4TD	2.2	110	340	A6	1635	–	–	6.7	D			A
Kluger	**Tougher looks, better manners**													
☑ Practical and roomy; quieter and more dynamically polished; strong engine; nice price														
☒ Lack of a diesel narrows its appeal; average cabin plastics; no longer made in Japan														
• **The Pick:** GX front-drive, with its standard seven seats and Australian suspension tune														
GX	$40,990	V6	3.5	201	337	A6	1935	8.3		10.2	91	54		F
GX	$44,990	V6	3.5	201	337	A6	2005	8.7		10.6	91	55		A
GXL	$49,990	V6	3.5	201	337	A6	1950	8.3		10.2	91	55		F
GXL	$53,990	V6	3.5	201	337	A6	2020	8.7		10.6	91	56		A
Grande	$63,142	V6	3.5	201	337	A6	1990	8.3		10.4	91	56		F
Grande	$67,130	V6	3.5	201	337	A6	2060	*7.9*	*15.7*	10.6	91	57	09/15	A
Fortuner	**Hilux spawns an SUV**													
☑ Genuine off-road ability; rugged and durable; interior space; black steelies on base cars														
☒ Vague steering; choppy ride; sluggish six-speed auto; lacks equipment of some rivals														
• **The Pick:** Go for a GXL with the sinister black wheels, and stick with the manual														
GX	$47,990	L4TD	2.8	130	420	M6	2110	–	–	7.8	D			A
GX	$49,990	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6	2110	–	–	8.6	D			A
GXL	$52,990	L4TD	2.8	130	420	M6	2110	–	–	7.8	D			A
GXL	$54,990	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6	2110	–	–	8.6	D			A
Crusader	$59,990	L4TD	2.8	130	420	M6	2135	–	–	7.8	D			A
Crusader	$61,990	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6	2135	–	–	8.6	D			A
Prado	**Seven-seater 4WD with real off-road ability**													
☑ More torque from new diesel; grunty petrol V6; great off-road; massive 150-litre fuel tank														
☒ Separate chassis and live rear axle hobbles handling; swing-out tailgate														
• **The Pick:** Go for the refined diesel; VX with kinetic suspension option offers best handling														
GX 5-seat	$52,990	L4TD	2.8	130	420	M6	2150	–	–	8.8	D	61		A
GX 5-seat	$54,990	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6		–	–	8.8	D	60		A
GX	$55,490	L4TD	2.8	130	420	M6		–	–	8.8	D	61		A
GX	$57,490	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6		–	–	8.8	D	60		A
GXL	$59,990	L4TD	2.8	130	420	M6	2290	–	–	8.5	D	58		A
GXL	$61,990	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6		–	–	8.8	D	62		A
GXL	$60,990	V6	4.0	207	381	A6	2290	–	–	13.0	91	61		A
VX	$72,990	V6	4.0	207	381	A6		–	–	13.0	91	61		A
VX	$73,990	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6		–	–	8.8	D	61		A
Kakadu	$83,490	V6	4.0	207	381	A6	2355	–	–	13.0	91	57		A
Kakadu	$84,490	L4TD	2.8	130	450	A6	2435	–	–	8.8	D	61		A
FJ Cruiser	**More credible than a Hummer**													
☑ Proper off-road ability combined with retro, butch styling and toey V6; 150-litre fuel tank														
☒ Prado-based chassis not at all dynamic; 4.0-litre engine can get thirsty														
• **The Pick:** Only one option, and it's one of a handful of short wheelbase SUVs still on sale														
	$46,990	V6	4.0	200	380	A5	2000	–	–	11.4	91	57	09/11	A
LandCruiser	**King of the outback ... not the suburbs**													
☑ Wonderful cruise comfort and exceptional refinement; go-anywhere ruggedness														
☒ It's a tank; cabin entry/egress difficult; brakes easily waterlogged; lumbering dynamics														
• **The Pick:** Outstanding diesel V8; go for the VX with the tricky KDSS suspension														
GX	$76,500	V8TTD	4.5	195	650	A6	2635	–	–	10.3	D	67		A
GXL	$82,000	V8	4.6	227	439	A6	2585	–	–	13.6	91	67		A
GXL	$87,000	V8TTD	4.5	195	650	A6	2630	–	–	10.3	D	67		A
VX	$92,500	V8	4.6	227	439	A6	2640	–	–	13.6	91	61		A
VX	$97,500	V8TTD	4.5	195	650	A6	2705	–	–	10.3	D	61		A
Sahara	$113,500	V8	4.6	227	439	A6	2640	–	–	13.6	91	61		A
Sahara	$118,500	V8TTD	4.5	195	650	A6	2705	–	–	10.3	D	61		A

Volkswagen

3yr/unlimited
www.volkswagen.com.au

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
Polo	**2010 *Wheels* Car of the Year**													
☑ Just-updated Polo still a good thing; slick 81kW 1.2 turbo; deceptively rapid GTI														
☒ Class-leading active safety kit is optional; rivals have closed in on Polo's quality lead														
• **The Pick:** Providing you tick the (standard for MY16) adaptive dampers, a GTI manual														
66TSI Trendline	$16,990	L4T	1.2	66	160	M5	1032	10.8	–	4.7	95	47		F
66TSI Trendline	$19,490	L4T	1.2	66	160	S7	1064	*11.3*	*18.0*	4.7	95	46	03/15	F
81TSI Comfortline	$18,490	L4T	1.2	81	175	M6	1060	9.3	–	4.8	95	47		F
81TSI Comfortline	$20,990	L4T	1.2	81	175	S7	1088	9.3	–	4.7	95	46	10/14	F
GTI	$27,490	L4T	1.8	141	320	M6	1234	*6.4*	*14.7*	6.1	95	55	10/15	F
GTI	$29,990	L4T	1.8	141	250	S7	1242	6.7	–	5.7	95	55		F
Beetle	**Now a proper car**													
☑ Modern Beetle has a useable boot, a functional interior, and multi-link IRS														
☒ A Golf is better and cheaper; rear seat space still compromised														
• **The Pick:** A beautifully restored 1975 rack-and-pinion Superbug L, or a Karmann Ghia														
Coupe	$31,390	L4T	1.4	118	240	M6	1292	8.3	–	6.8	95	42		F
Coupe	$33,890	L4T	1.4	118	240	S7	1299	8.3	–	6.8	95	41	10/13	F
Golf	**Our 2013 Car of the Year**													
☑ Golf Mk7 aces the competition; stunning interior and refinement; brilliant GTI														
☒ All-wheel-drive R not as dynamic as GTI Performance; no diesel or GTI-P manuals														
• **The Pick:** For now, the excellent 92TSI. Or the fabulous GTI in any specification														
92TSI	$22,490	L4T	1.4	92	200	M6	1209	9.1	–	5.3	95	56	04/15	F
92TSI	$24,990	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1233	9.1	–	5.1	95	56	12/13	F
92TSI Trendline	$23,990	L4T	1.4	92	200	M6	1209	9.1	–	5.3	95	56		F
92TSI Trendline	$26,490	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1233	9.1	–	5.1	95	56		F
92TSI Comfortline	$27,990	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1233	*9.1*	*16.7*	5.1	95	58	12/15	F
110TSI Highline	$32,990	L4T	1.4	110	250	S7	1265	8.2	–	5.1	95	59	03/14	F
110TDI Highline	$35,490	L4TD	2.0	110	340	S6	1326	*8.1*	*15.9*	4.6	D	58	08/13	F
GTI	$40,990	L4T	2.0	162	350	M6	1313	6.5	–	6.2	98	60		F
GTI	$43,490	L4T	2.0	162	350	S6	1324	*6.4*	*14.5*	6.6	98	59	11/13	F
GTI Performance	$46,490	L4T	2.0	169	350	S6	1364	*6.4*	*14.6*	6.6	98	60	05/14	F
R	$52,740	L4T	2.0	206	380	M6	1476	5.2		7.1	98	61		A
R	$55,240	L4T	2.0	206	380	S6	1495	*5.0*	*13.2*	6.9	98	61	05/14	A
Golf wagon	**COTY winner plus cargo**													
☑ Stacks of space with all of Golf VII's polish and class; cheaper than outgoing Golf wagon														
☒ No manual 'box; only TDI variant is pricey; Golf R wagon and 1.8T Alltrack not here yet														
• **The Pick:** 92TSI Trendline wagon is great value and packs all the engine you really need														
92TSI Trendline	$27,990	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1312	9.5	–	5.2	95	59	04/14	F
92TSI Comfortline	$29,490	L4T	1.4	92	200	S7	1312	9.5	–	5.2	95	60		F
110TSI Highline	$34,490	L4T	1.4	110	250	S7	1312	8.6	–	5.1	95	60		F
110TDI Highline	$36,990	L4TD	2.0	110	340	S6	1326	8.9	–	4.6	D	60		F
Alltrack	$37,990	L4T	1.8	132	280	S6	1479	7.8	–	6.7	95			A
Golf Cabriolet	**Firmly-suspended soft-top**													
☑ Drives like a (Mk6) Golf; neatly packages four seats into a compact, relatively light body														
☒ Increased steering vibration over hatch; dated design; won't be replaced until Golf Mk8														
• **The Pick:** For not that much extra coin, Audi's new-gen A3 Cabriolet is a much better bet														
118TSI Exclusive	$43,990	L4ST	1.4	118	240	S7	1443	8.4	–	6.5	95	58	01/12	F

LOAD 'EM UP

VOLKSWAGEN has unleashed its latest T6 Caravelle and Multivan people-movers.

Pricing remains vaguely similar to the models they replace, as does the line-up. For the Caravelle that means a single nine-seat model, while the Multivan arrives with a choice of short and long wheelbases, two- and four-wheel drive, single- and twin-turbo engines, the latter now pumping out 150kW/450Nm.

There's also a limited-run Generation Six Multivan with two-tone paint and extra features intended to evoke the iconic Kombi.

Jetta — Lots of VW for the money

✅ Twincharger punch for $23K; huge boot; plenty of room; efficient engines; slick cabin
❌ Bland styling; old-Golf platform and interior archiecture; people will think you play bowls
• **The Pick:** A base 118TSI over any Corolla, Lancer, Elantra, Cerato or Cruze sedan

	Price	Eng type	Eng size	Power	Torque	Trans.	Kerb weight	0-100 km/h	0-400 metres	Fuel cons.	RON	Resale %	Issue tested	Drive
118TSI Trendline	$22,990	L4ST	1.4	118	240	M6	1315	8.3	–	6.5	95	42	01/12	F
118TSI Trendline	$25,490	L4ST	1.4	118	240	S7	1335	8.3	–	6.2	95	42	12/11	F
118TSI Comfortline	$29,990	L4ST	1.4	118	240	S7	1335	*7.5*	*15.1*	6.2	95	44	03/12	F
118TSI Highline	$33,990	L4ST	1.4	118	240	S7	1335	8.3	–	6.2	95	44		F
103TDI Highline	$36,490	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1454	9.5	–	5.5	D	43		F
155TSI Highline Sport	$39,990	L4T	2.0	155	280	S6	1446	7.2	–	7.8	95	45		F

Passat — Predictable but pleasing

✅ Suprisingly sporty chassis; slick interior; excellent seats; sweet 1.8 turbo petrol
❌ Diesel's inconsistent response; no performance engine variant to suit R-Line suspension
• **The Pick:** Comfortline wagon, combining space, equipment, class and driving fun

132TSI	$34,990	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1450	7.9	–	6.0	95			F
132TSI wagon	$36,990	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1483	8.1	–	6.0	95			F
132TSI Comfortline	$44,990	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1450	7.9	–	6.0	95			F
132TSI C'line wgn	$46,990	L4T	1.8	132	250	S7	1483	8.1	–	6.0	95			F
140TDI Highline	$45,990	L4TD	2.0	140	400	S6	1517	7.7	–	4.8	D			F
140TDI H'line wgn	$47,990	L4TD	2.0	140	400	S6	1562	7.9	–	4.8	D			F

CC — Flicks Passat and picks up fifth seat

✅ Styling hints at Phaeton; finally gets a centre-rear belt; tuneful V6 is as lovely as ever
❌ Adaptive suspension doesn't work as well as Passat's standard dampers
• **The Pick:** For pace (and sound), the V6; for real living, the cheaper, thriftier TDI

130TDI	$56,990	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S6	1526	8.4	–	5.4	D	45	11/11	F
V6 FSI	$66,990	V6	3.6	220	350	S6	1656	5.6	–	9.7	95	46		A

Scirocco — Less Golf equals more fun

✅ Compared with Mk6 Golf R, front-drive Scirocco is 125kg lighter, quicker and sharper
❌ Not as practical as Golf and not as focused as Megane RS, but Scirocco is still superb
• **The Pick:** Manual for involvement, DSG for outright pace

R	$45,990	L4T	2.0	188	330	M6	1351	*6.1*	*14.1*	8.1	95	63	01/15	F
R	$48,490	L4T	2.0	188	330	S6	1371	6.0	–	8.2	95	63		F

Tiguan — Gets (corporate) grilled

✅ Excellent drivetrains, cabin quality, refinement, cornering agility, punchy new R-Line
❌ Small boot; electric parking brake; outdated dash design; bland styling; quite heavy
• **The Pick:** Front-drive 118TSI is superb value, while new 130kW TDI is both quick and frugal

118TSI	$28,990	L4ST	1.4	118	240	M6	1498	8.9	–	6.9	95	50		F
118TSI	$31,490	L4ST	1.4	118	240	S6	1581	8.9	–	7.3	95	50		F
132TSI	$36,990	L4T	2.0	132	280	S7	1626	*7.7*	*15.6*	8.8	95	52	08/14	A
130TDI	$39,990	L4TD	2.0	130	380	S7	1620	8.5		6.2	D	53		A
155 TSI R-Line	$44,990	L4T	2.0	155	280	S7	1642	7.3	–	8.8	95	56		A

Touareg — Cut-price class

✅ Slick and upmarket interior design; great drivetrains; vice-free handling; burbly R-Line
❌ Third row seats would be nice; pricey option packages; fatty-fatty fat kerb weight
• **The Pick:** 150TDI rivals a top-spec Territory on price, while V8 R-Line is a cut-price Cayenne

150TDI	$67,990	V6TD	3.0	150	450	A8	2146	8.5	–	7.2	D	63	09/11	A
V6 TDI	$81,990	V6TD	3.0	180	550	A8	2159	7.6	–	7.4	D	63	09/11	A
V8 TDI R-Line	$114,990	V8TTD	4.1	250	800	A8	2287	5.8	–	9.2	D	61		A

Caddy — Top-class compact people mover

✅ Room, ride quality and refinement all top-notch; excellent diesel drivetrains
❌ Not exactly sexy; primitive leaf-sprung rear suspension; no rear airbags
• **The Pick:** Seven-seat Maxi with torquey 2.0-litre makes for a versatile kiddy hauler

250TDI Trendline	$30,290	L4TD	1.6	75	250	M5	1460	–	–	5.8	D	48		F
250TDI Trendline	$33,290	L4TD	1.6	75	250	S7	1510	–	–	5.8	D	48		F
250TDI Maxi C'line	$40,290	L4TD	1.6	75	250	S7	1541	–	–	5.9	D	49		F
320TDI Maxi C'line	$42,290	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	1561	–	–	6.5	D	50	05/11	F
320TDI M C'line 4M	$45,790	L4TD	2.0	103	320	S6	–	–	–	6.8	D	50		A

Caravelle — The workhorse people mover

✅ Brilliantly basic and humble nine-seater; new model sheds some unwanted kilos
❌ 2.0-litre turbo-diesel is honest but pretty knackerless when fully laden
• **The Pick:** There aren't many other options if you need to carry nine people

TDI340 LWB	$49,990	L4TD	2.0	103	340	S7	1857	–	–	7.7	D			F

Multivan — Tarago meets its match

✅ Hugely spacious and well-built cabin; grunty and efficient diesel; great active safety gear
❌ Range-topping models are expensive; base models only get single turbo engine
• **The Pick:** Crank the Rammstein and the eight-seater Highline morphs into the mosh bus

C'line TDI340 SWB	$49,990	L4TD	2.0	103	340	S7	2174	–	–	7.7	D			F
C'line TDI340 LWB	$53,990	L4TD	2.0	103	340	S7	2238	–	–	7.7	D			F
Highline TDI450	$76,490	L4TTD	2.0	150	450	S7	2303	–	–	6.5	D			F
H'line TDI450 4Mot'	$79,990	L4TTD	2.0	150	450	S7	2413	–	–	6.8	D			A
Executive TDI450	$80,490	L4TTD	2.0	150	450	S7	2332			6.5	D			F

Volvo
3yr/unlimited
www.volvocars.com.au

V40 — Focus-based and better for it

✅ Focus underpinnings; classy interior; terrific D4 and T4 drivetrains; sweet manual 'box
❌ D2 struggles; T5 has terrible ride; big turning circle; cramped back seat; autos expensive
• **The Pick:** D4 Kinetic manual offers torque aplenty with sub-5L/km economy

D2 Kinetic	$36,990	L4TD	1.6	84	270	S6	1402	12.1	–	4.2	D	53	09/12	F
D4 Kinetic	$42,990	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1505	7.2	–	4.5	D	54		F
D4 Luxury	$46,990	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A6	1505	7.2	–	4.5	D	55		F
T4 Kinetic	$41,990	L5T	2.0	132	300	A6	1438	7.9	–	7.6	95	54		F
T4 Luxury	$45,990	L5T	2.0	132	300	A6	1438	7.9	–	7.6	95	55		F
T5 R-Design	$50,400	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1580	6.3	–	6.1	95	55		F
XC D4 Luxury	$47,990	L4TD	2.0	140	400	A8	1505	7.5	–	4.5	D	55		A
XC T5 Luxury	$52,990	L5T	2.0	180	350	A8	1633	6.4	–	6.9	95	56		A

S60 — New face, and now new fours

✅ Handsome facelift with punchy engines and a plush interior; Polestar is nicely balanced
❌ Handling of the rest isn't 3 Series-grade; all-new fours don't warble like the old fives did
• **The Pick:** Front-drive T4 and T5 are quick, frugal and terrific value

T4 Kinetic	$49,990	L4T	1.6	132	240	S6	1420	9.0	–	6.8	95	47		F
T4 Luxury	$54,990	L4T	1.6	132	240	S6	1420	9.0	–	6.8	95	47		F
D4 Kinetic	$56,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A8	1539	7.4	–	4.2	D	47		F
D4 Luxury	$61,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A8	1539	7.4	–	4.2	D	47		F
T5 Luxury	$59,900	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1527	6.3	–	6.4	95	47		F
T5 R-Design	$63,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1527	6.3	–	6.4	95	47		F
T6 R-Design	$71,600	L6T	2.0	242	480	A6			–	10.2	95	47		A
Polestar	$99,600	L6T	3.0	257	500	A6	1609	4.9	–	10.2	95	44	06/14	A

V60 — Volvo thinks outside the box

✅ Even more stylish than S60 sedan; versatile 40/20/40 split-fold rear seat and 430L boot
❌ Not a packing-crate-swallower like Volvos of old; lacks composure on rough roads
• **The Pick:** Like S60, the T5 is the all-rounder – great value, punchy and thrifty

D4 Kinetic	$57,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A8	1669	7.6	–	4.5	D	47		F
D4 Luxury	$62,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A8	1669	7.6	–	4.5	D	47		F
T5 Kinetic	$55,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1639	6.4	–	6.8	95	51		F
T5 Luxury	$59,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1639	6.4	–	6.8	95	47		F
T5 R-Design	$64,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1639	6.4	–	6.8	95	47		F
T6 R-Design	$72,600	L6T	3.0	242	480	A6	1747	5.8	–	10.3	95	48		A
Polestar	$102,600	L6T	3.0	257	500	A6	1834	4.9	–	10.2	95	48		A

S80 — Top of the bowls club hierarchy

✅ Smooth turbo-petrol six; lush seats; much-improved R-design suspension
❌ Unwieldy turning circle; jittery ride; limp steering; snarly V8 has been dropped
• **The Pick:** S80 is an individualist's alternative to a 5 Series ... but we wouldn't

T6 Luxury	$84,900	L6T	3.0	224	440	A6	1786	6.4	–	10.0	95	37	11/10	A

XC60 — The punters' favourite Volvo

✅ All the usual Volvo SUV virtues, but with decent driver appeal and style; lovely petrol six
❌ Ride turns brittle on busted Aussie tarmac; lacks body control and steering feel
• **The Pick:** Likeable Swede makes a safe family car. D4 and T5 are brisk, yet frugal

D4 Kinetic	$59,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A8	1748	8.5	–	4.9	D	56		F
D4 Luxury	$64,990	L4TD	2.0	133	400	A8	1748	*8.5*	*16.2*	4.9	D	56	08/15	F
T5 Kinetic	$57,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1766	7.2	–	7.0	95	55		F
T5 Luxury	$62,990	L4T	2.0	180	350	A8	1766	7.2	–	7.0	95	56		F
D5 Luxury	$69,990	L5TTD	2.4	158	440	A6	1819	8.3	–	6.9	D	56		A
D5 R-Design	$71,990	L5TTD	2.4	169	470	A6	1819	8.1	–	6.9	D	56		A
T6 Luxury	$72,600	L6T	3.0	224	440	A6	1846	7.3	–	10.7	95	56	01/14	A
T6 R-Design	$74,600	L6T	3.0	242	480	A6	1846	7.0	–	10.5	95	56		A

XC70 — Swedish take on a Subaru Outback

✅ Third-gen 'crossover' brings a choice of turbo-diesel or petrol six-pack power
❌ It's unlikely ever to leave upper-class suburbs; soggy handling ... still
• **The Pick:** Not great on bitumen, but fine for fire trails, farms and the Snowies. Go the diesel

D5 Kinetic	$58,990	L5TD	2.4	158	440	A6	1890	8.3	–	6.9	D	56		A
D5 Luxury	$60,290	L5TD	2.4	158	440	A6	1890	8.3	–	6.9	D	56		A
T6 Luxury	$69,900	L6T	3.0	224	440	A6	1870	7.4	–	10.2	95	56		A

XC90 — It's still about the safety

✅ Faster and more frugal than its predecessor; attention to detail inside; great drivetrains
❌ Average dynamics with below-par handling; excessive body roll; German-level price tag
• **The Pick:** T6 engine has plenty of punch and makes more sense in Momentum trim

Momentum D5	$89,950	L4TTD	2.0	165	470	A8	1970	7.8	–	6.2	D	61		A
Momentum T6	$93,950	L4ST	2.0	235	400	A8	1965	6.5	–	8.5	95	60		A
Inscription D5	$96,950	L4TTD	2.0	165	470	A8	1970	7.8	–	6.2	D	61		A
Inscription T6	$100,950	L4ST	2.0	235	400	A8	1965	6.5	–	8.5	95	60		A
R-Design D5	$97,950	L4TTD	2.0	165	470	A8	1970	7.8	–	6.2	D	61		A
R-Design T6	$101,950	L4ST	2.0	235	400	A8	1965	6.5	–	8.5	95	60		A
R-Design T8	$122,950	L4STH	2.0	235	400	A8	2296	5.6	–	2.1	95	60		A

PRIVACY NOTICE
This issue of *Wheels* is published by Bauer Media Pty Ltd (Bauer). Bauer may use and disclose your information in accordance with our Privacy Policy, including to provide you with your requested products or services and to keep you informed of other Bauer publications, products, services and events. Our Privacy Policy is located at www.bauer-media.com.au/privacy/ It also sets out on how you can access or correct your personal information and lodge a complaint. Bauer may disclose your personal information offshore to its owners, joint venture partners, service providers and agents located throughout the world, including in New Zealand, USA, the Philippines and the European Union. In addition, this issue may contain Reader Offers, being offers, competitions or surveys. Reader Offers may require you to provide personal information to enter or to take part. Personal information collected for Reader Offers may be disclosed by us to service providers assisting Bauer in the conduct of the Reader Offer and to other organisations providing special prizes or offers that are part of the Reader Offer. An opt-out choice is provided with a Reader Offer. Unless you exercise that opt-out choice, personal information collected for Reader Offers may also be disclosed by us to other organisations for use by them to inform you about other products, services or events or to give to other organisations that may use this information for this purpose. If you require further information, please contact Bauer's Privacy Officer either by email at privacyofficer@bauer-media.com.au or mail at Privacy Officer Bauer Media Pty Ltd, 54 Park Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

INSURANCE DISCLAIMER
Based on a 35-year-old male, location Chatswood 2067, Rating 1 For Life, No Finance, Private Use. All prices are subject to AAMI's underwriting guidelines and conditions.

PETER ROBINSON'S

Classic Wheels

EPIC TALES FROM OUR ARCHIVES

FIRST PUBLISHED MARCH 1995

Top speed shootout

WHEELS' FASCINATION WITH TOP SPEEDS DATES FROM THE MAGAZINE'S FIRST FORMAL ROAD TEST IN 1954. THE RENAULT DISTRIBUTORS PROUDLY CLAIMED THAT THE LITTLE 750 WAS CAPABLE OF 70MPH (113KM/H). NOT SO. WE RECORDED A TRUE TOP SPEED OF 58MPH (94KM/H), WITH THE SPEEDO NEEDLE HOVERING OVER, GUESS WHAT, 70MPH.

If the intrusion of overall speed limits in the 1980s made testing a car's top speed difficult on public roads, the restrictions did little to reduce readers' interest in knowing the top speed of test cars, even those models (mostly German) supposedly electronically limited to 250km/h.

So began the *Wheels* top speed fest. With access to the Holden Lang Lang proving ground's 4.7km banked circle and, later, the Avalon airstrip, we set out to establish the identity of the fastest cars in Australia. Through the 1990s the test occurred on an almost annual basis, perhaps most famously in 1995 with master driver Peter Brock at the wheel, and John Carey at the keyboard.

After two laps of flat-out speed on the bowl in each of 15 high-performance test cars, our laser speed measurement equipment revealed all. In 1995 a Porsche 928 GTS won the battle with a 262km/h v-max, just four km/h faster than a 911 Carrera 4. Lang Lang also provided the perfect opportunity to test standing-start acceleration; again the 928 scored with a standing 400-metre time of 14.1sec, one-tenth quicker than the 911.

Brock ran a commentary on each car. Of the 928, he said: "Felt like it could do with a bit of extra rebound on the front shockers. The front was a bit floaty. On the top of the banking you have to pay attention." Strange that Brock makes no mention of more likely aerodynamic issues.

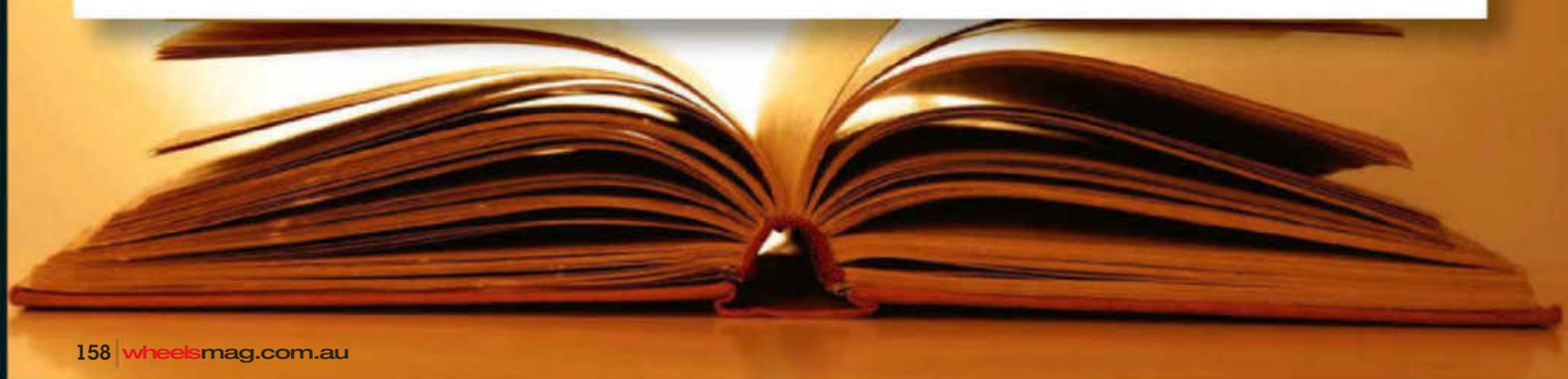
HSV's GTS 215i (246km/h, 14.5sec 400m) ran third. Brock, now back in the Holden camp after the dramas of the Polarizer, commented: "It's very stable, very easy to drive. Gearing-wise it's a curious one because you can pull 5250rpm in fifth – and I did one lap in sixth just to see if I could urge it to increase speed and it actually just dropped five or six kay, so gearing is hurting it."

Still, it was quicker than the BMW 840Ci's 243km/h and leisurely 16.2sec 400m time. Slowest of our class of '95 was a Caterham Super 7 JPE at 208km/h, though its 13.1sec 400m sprint proved fastest.

A year later, with Kevin Bartlett driving, we somehow managed to include a Ferrari F40 – yes, out of production, but who wouldn't want to know what Ferrari's supercar was capable of? – and a Lamborghini Diablo VT in the test. The F40 ran 299km/h to shatter all previous records, though in deference to the F40's owner we didn't run standing-start times. The Diablo turned 296km/h, but one of the rear tyres peeled a patch of rubber, leaving the radial belts naked, just as Bartlett was about to start his acceleration runs. Proved, again, that at these speeds you can't be too careful.

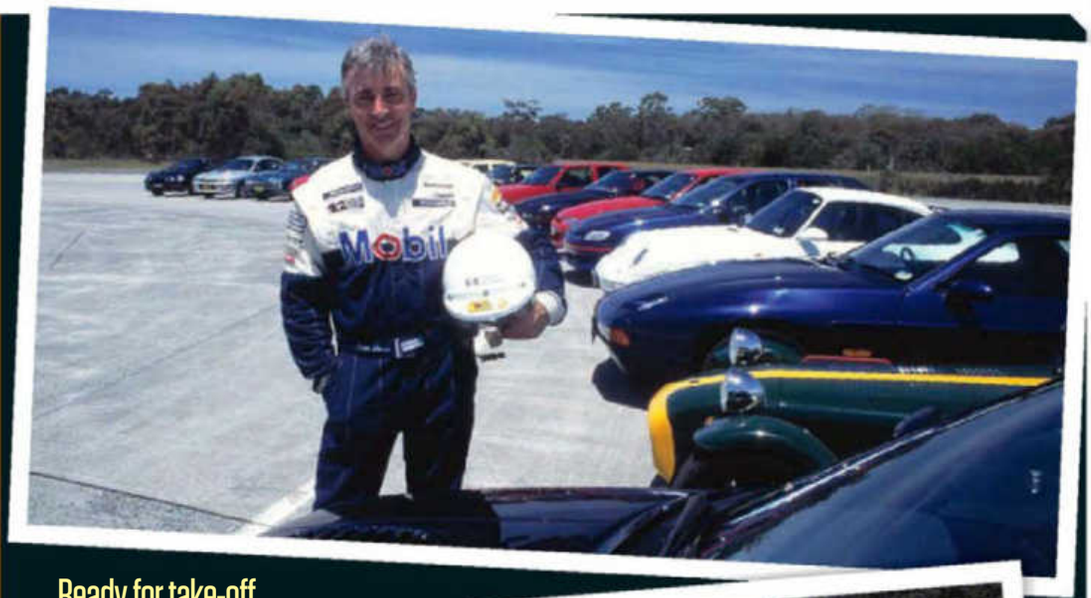
"I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU, IF THIS HAD BEEN THE EARLIER MODEL 911, SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN PARKED IN THE SCRUB OVER THERE UPSETTING THE LIZARDS. IT'S NOW A VERY CIVILISED CAR."

– PETER BROCK ON THE PORSCHE 911 CARRERA 4, 1995



Next *issue*

Robbo drives to Bourke and back in a single day to put the HQ Kingswood through the most exhaustive test yet of the new Holden



Ready for take-off

By 2001 *Wheels* was using the 1865-hectare Avalon airport site near Geelong, the top speed measured at the end of a 2.5km straight, with 0.5km of runway to spare in case of brake failure. Rally ace Neal Bates worked through 17 cars, all capable of more than 220km/h, across three runs. Of the production cars, the Porsche 911 Turbo's 284.9km/h proved fastest, though it was beaten by a race car; Ford's Tickford V8 supercar ran 292.3km/h and 12.7sec for the 400m, exactly matching the 911.

ALSO IN *WHEELS*, March 1995

Mitsubishi's V6-powered Magna surfaces in Japan; updated Ford Fairlane sprung weeks ahead of launch; Godzilla is back with the new Nissan Skyline GT-R revealed; TVR Griffith tested; BTCC chief and Aussie expat Alan Gow gives Australian touring car racing less than five years to run; Michael "Miguel" Stahl pits the Spanish-built Holden Barina GSi against Spain's Seat Ibiza GTi.

READ THIS STORY AND HEAPS MORE CLASSICS AT WheelsMag.com.au/classic

THE WAY IT WAS

'95

Adelaide alive!

More than 210,000 fans watch as Damon Hill dominates South Australia's last-ever Formula One race ahead of its controversial move to Melbourne.

Yahoo, seriously

The Simpsons visits Australia after Bart runs up a massive phone bill trying to discover if toilet water swirls in the opposite direction in the Southern Hemisphere.

Super stoush

Media moguls Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer launch a high-cost war over the future of rugby league in Australia, splitting the sport. The arguing raged for two years; the actual competition only one.

Moving up to A grade

MG awoke from its post-war slumber with this sleek new convertible

CECIL Kimber and his MG marque – the initials stand for Morris Garages, where Kimber worked – gave the world not just fast, affordable and reliable sports cars, but a new formula for making them. Lotus, Porsche and the AC Cobra are just a few examples of performance legends built on the back of proven, mass-produced models.

Early MGs were giant-killers in circuit racing and speed records, but by the early 1950s their upright, "square-rigger" styling was a major sales handicap. Jaguar's XK120 (1948) and the later Austin Healey 100/4 and Triumph TR2 (both 1953) had reset the template.

As ever, MG turned to its racing experience. In 1951, motorsport photographer and successful MG TC racer George Phillips commissioned Syd Enever, who worked in MG's experimental department, to design a streamlined body for the 1951 Le Mans sports car race. Based on a new TD chassis and running gear, the EX172 pointed the way for MG's future. However, development of a streamlined successor to the TD was stalled by BMC management's preoccupation with the Austin Healey.

After a short succession of EX prototypes, in June 1955 a trio of factory-entered EX182 prototypes arrived at Le Mans. Outwardly similar to the earlier 172, a widened chassis now allowed the occupants to be positioned much lower. Beneath the bonnet sat BMC's fresh B-series 1.5-litre four-cylinder engine, launched in the 1953 MG Magnette sedan.

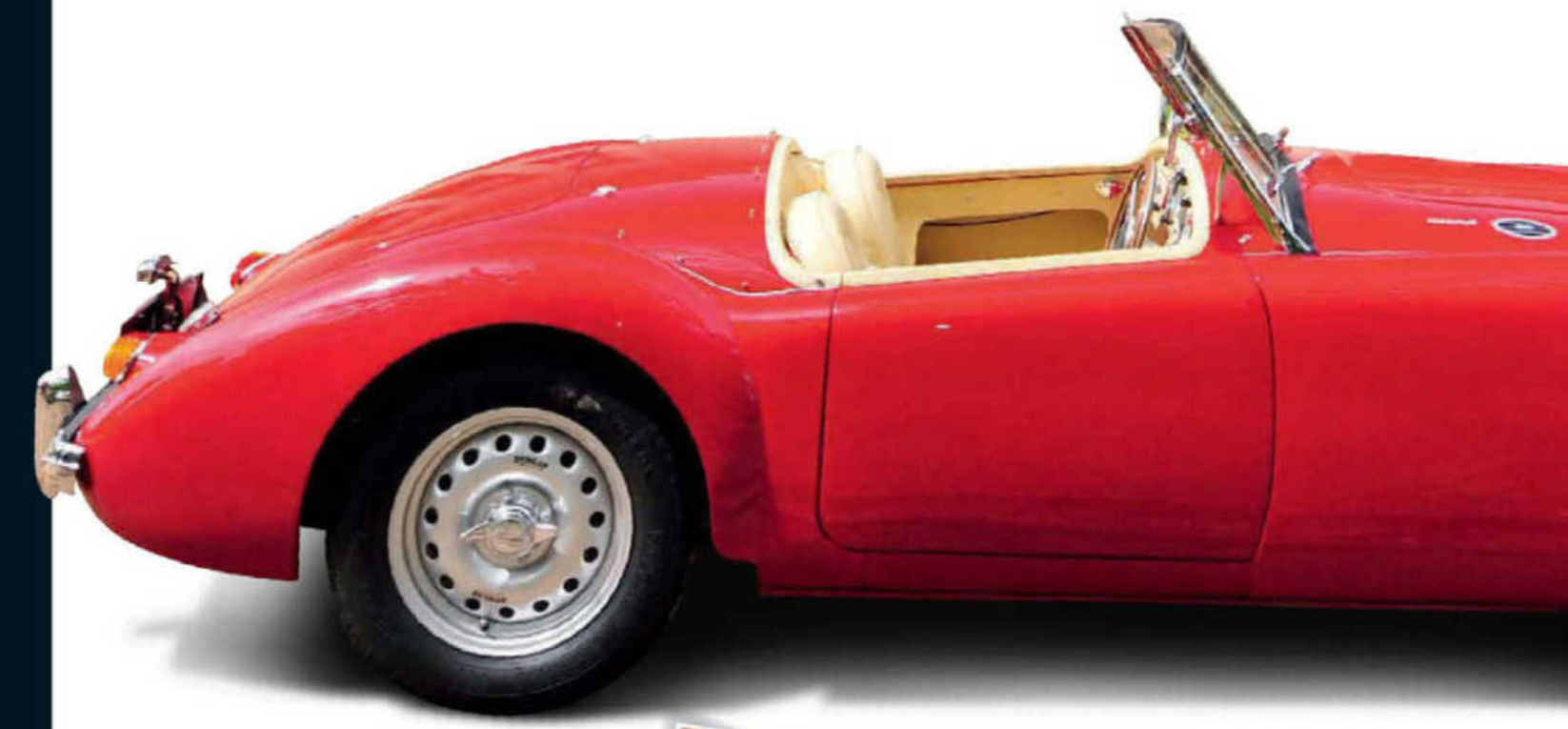
The MGA, launched in September 1955, was effectively a productionised EX182. Beneath the all-new body was a well-measured recipe of new and existing parts, including steering and front suspension partly pilfered from the recently defunct Y-series sedan.

Despite some initial resistance to the suddenly modern styling, the MGA sold up a storm. The lion's share of production went to the US, where its timing played perfectly into the post-war sports car boom.

Performance was adequate-and-a-bit – the initial output of 54kW was quickly upped to 61kW – and road-testers were impressed with the MGA's steering and its forgiving, long-wheelbase handling and ride.

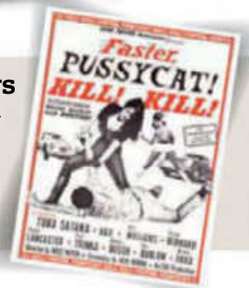
Instant popularity in racing prompted MG to produce the Twin Cam in 1958. It was exotic, fast and fragile; just 2111 were built. Its bigger-bore block and (front) disc brakes were adopted by the (sohc) MGA 1600 in 1959, followed in 1961 by a refined, swansong MkII (pictured).

Some 101,081 MGA roadsters and coupes were built from 1955-62, most being the early 1.5-litre models. It had been the biggest-selling model in MG's history, but its successor, the MGB, would outsell it almost four times over. What could possibly go wrong?



Fast & factual 05

1 Hollywood horrors
MGAs were drawn to B-movies. Our faves are *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), *The Horror of Party Beach* (1964) and *Daughters of Satan* (1972)



2 Made in Oz
MGAs were assembled in Australia from kits by BMC in Zetland, Sydney. Local content varied, but went right up to Oz-made 1622cc engines

Next *issue*

Mercedes-Benz 500E

In detail

Modest gains

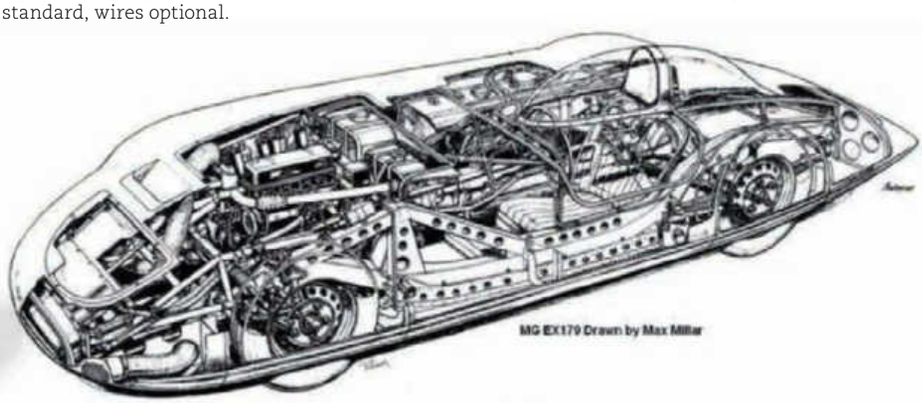
The 1489cc pushrod B-series engine with twin SU carbs initially made 54kW @ 5500rpm (soon 61kW @ 5600). In 1958 it was joined by an alloy-head Twin Cam variant, bored to 1588cc and making 80kW @ 6700rpm. A pushrod version went into the MGA 1600 in 1958, later enlarged to 1622cc (69kW) for the 1600 Mk2. All drove the rear wheels through a four-speed gearbox.

Good vibrations

MGA's widened chassis created lower, more spacious seating for two. The original spring-spoked steering wheel (not the solid one pictured) eased road vibrations. Full gauges, rheostat panel switch and map reading light were pleasant bonuses on the steel-faced dash. "Rubber-filled leather trim" on dash top was a "safety measure". Roadsters lacked exterior door handles; you reached under the sieve-like soft-top and pulled a cable inside the door trim.

Body on frame

The wide-spaced ladder chassis retained the T-series' 2388mm wheelbase. A pressed-steel, structural body frame sat atop; the roadster and coupe bodies were in steel with aluminium doors, bonnet and boot. Front suspension was independent by coils and kingpins, rear by leaf-sprung live axle and steering by rack-and-pinion. Twin Cam (1958) introduced disc brakes to the '1600' range. Steel wheels were standard, wires optional.



MG EX179 Drawn by Max Millar

3

Phoney numbers

MG's traditional chassis numbering, which had started with the factory's telephone number (Abingdon 251), finally ended with the MGA

4

Streamliner

The MGA's wide-spaced ladder chassis is a direct descendant of EX179, George Eyston's famous 1954-57 Bonneville record-breaking streamliner (above)

5

Cop that!

Dozens of MGAs, fitted with high-accuracy speedometers, were used by various British police forces as highway pursuit cars

Tricky by name...

The man who hides all Ford Australia's secret new models

IT'S a fair bet that when Neil Trickey began his apprenticeship as a fitter and turner in the small Victorian town of Maryborough, he wouldn't have guessed he'd one day be designing slinky, body-hugging outerwear for Ford models. That's "Ford models" as in Falcon sedans and Ranger utes, not the New York fashion agency.

Trickey, 57, joined Ford Australia in 1977 and moved into the prototype shop in 2000. "It really is an interesting job," he says. "The engineer comes to me and says, 'I want to make this widget'. So I go off and make a prototype part that he wants as best I can, or as best we can get it made. It could be any part of the car. And we're playing with these things three years before you guys get to see 'em."

Trickey's worked in many different areas of toolmaking, with a lot of experience with CAD and sheetmetal stamping. He's also the go-to guy for prototype camouflage.

"We used to use fibreglass, vacuum-formed panels, all sorts of things," he says. "Then there were the vinyl covers. They added a lot of weight and we discovered that they tended to hold the vehicle together. They'd test the vehicle for months and it'd be terrific, but when they took the camo off, they started finding the bumpers coming loose. It also distracted from the wind-noise and cooling.

"We moved to stretchy Lycra covers after I saw a Commodore, a VE, all camouflaged, driving past me one day. I found out that a Melbourne company had developed the idea to use Lycra.

"It was quite good, because the first job – I think it was BA Falcon – we'd gone through prototype build, say 50 cars, and they said there wouldn't be any XRs in the mix. So I made all these camouflage covers off a base-model car, no spoilers or anything. The first car that came down was a GT! But the Lycra just stretched over everything. You just clip it on, it hit all the high spots and you couldn't see anything in between. It was brilliant."

To make the covers (they're sometimes subbed-out to upholstery shops), Trickey starts with measurements from the previous model. "Then we lay it over the clay model – when we're allowed to – being careful not to damage them. We also have our CAD information. But you don't really know that it's going to work until you drive one out onto the road."

The prototype test team loved Lycra, too. "The old vinyl camo would stay on the cars pretty well, but every day the engineers need to take it all off to do their tests and take readings. Where the Lycra, it had a separate engine hood bag, separate bumper-grille-headlights – it's so much easier for them."

As keen readers will know from our News pages, the Lycra is gradually being superseded by psychedelic-patterned adhesive film.

"It's about as quick to put on as the Lycra, it doesn't add any weight or affect the aero at all," Trickey says. "The only thing is, I don't think it hides quite as well.

"Still, the managers seem to like it. They're the guys you've got to impress, I suppose."

CAMO KING

Ford camouflage expert Neil Trickey says there are several stages of prototype. "There's X1, the basic concept in terms of size, seating position or whatever ... Then you go into M1, where the underbody has all got to be correct. Then it's VP, verification prototype, where the 'top hat' is about 80 percent there. By then, you'd want pretty good camo."

CARS | BIKES | BOATS | KARTS

Proudly supported by

EST 1911 DUTTON Garage

BROCK
A Time To Celebrate

FPM Motorexpo 16

MOTORING & MOTORSPORT EXPO

April 8, 9 & 10th 2016

Royal Exhibition Building

Nicholson Street, Carlton, Melbourne

Come and see the finest display of Factory Performance Machines you have ever seen. We have it all...

- Production Cars Road & Race
- Muscle Cars 1960 - 80's era
- Performance Bikes Road & Race
- Drag, Ski & Jet Sprint Boats
- Group C & A, 5.0 Touring Cars, Sports Sedans, F1
- Go Karts, Superkarts & Histroric Karts
- Over 180 Vehicles & over 40 Trade Stands
- "Back to the Future" DeLorean and Doc Braun
- Signings, Interviews, Product Launches, Give-Aways and a lots lots more.

Find us on facebook

We'll see you there...

Team FPM Motorexpo

0438 1986 05 or 0438 061 248
info@fpmmotorexpo.com

FPM | Motorexpo.com

vcm performance a point of difference

SHANNONS SHARE THE PASSION

PENRITE

Herrod PERFORMANCE

Motorcycle TRADER

The new A-Class.
Ready for a new generation.

A dynamic sporty design and unmistakable diamond radiator grille make the new A-Class the centre of attention. It delivers new levels of safety as standard with COLLISION PREVENTION ASSIST PLUS and features up to five drive programs for comfort without compromise. With Apple CarPlay™ for intuitive smartphone integration, the new A-Class is ready when you are.

www.mercedes-benz.com.au/aclass

Mercedes-Benz
The best or nothing.